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Saturday August 3 1996

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Cameroon 1.20	Japan 1.20	Monaco 1.20
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El Salvador 1.20	Oman 1.20	Portugal 1.20
England 1.20	Pakistan 1.20	Romania 1.20
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Finland 1.20	Peru 1.20	Slovenia 1.20
France 1.20	Poland 1.20	Slovakia 1.20
Germany 1.20	Portugal 1.20	Slovenia 1.20
Greece 1.20	Romania 1.20	Spain 1.20
	Russia 1.20	Sweden 1.20
	Saudi Arabia 1.20	Switzerland 1.20
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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 46,622

Olympics

Is Michael Johnson the greatest?

Sport page 12



Outlook

Now we're watching Big Brother

Plus Ian Botham's moustache

Context

Storming the pavilion of prejudice

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Major falls at the first hurdle

Sports pledge dashed by 'catastrophic' cuts

James Melkie
Community Affairs Editor

John Major's promise to transform Britain's poor Olympic record was shattered last night as it emerged that government cuts threatened the future of thousands

of sports coaching courses because they were not linked to traditional paid jobs. State funding will be withdrawn from programmes preparing people for "leisure time occupations" unless they can prove they are relevant for employment. Sports bodies warned of "catastrophic" consequences from proposals that under-

mined state-aided training of volunteers, the bedrock of the national coaching system. Lloyd Readhead, assistant technical director of the British Amateur Gymnastics Association, for which three-quarters of coaches are part-time, said: "If you don't have quality coaches, you don't have quality athletes." The outcry comes days after Mr Major promised a £300 million annual Raising the Game programme — with most of the money coming from the National Lottery — to improve the nation's sporting prospects. The Sports Council this

week promised a £20 million package aimed at top athletes so that the Atlanta games "are the last major international games at which they will have to struggle for financial support." Improvements to coaching arrangements will be among the demands from the British Olympic Association when they explain the disappointing medal haul from the present games to ministers next week. So far, Britain has won one gold, five silvers and six bronzes. The Sports Council, a quango answerable to the De-

partment for National Heritage, meets many of the costs of coaching athletes through grants to sports governing bodies, but the training of coaches is funded through the Further Education Funding Council, answerable to Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary. This has been affected by plans to tighten the rules of government funding for all vocational courses, which are persistently under attack for questionable standards and relevance. Sports bodies say that, even where they can win funding for job-related train-

ing, they will be subject to more bureaucracy and auditing checks than the colleges with which they have made franchise deals. A letter from an official in Mrs Shephard's department, Jane Benham, to the Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR), the umbrella sports organisation, said: "While this department does support the measures and policies in Raising the Game, I have to say that our support... for it does not include the assumption that funds made available for the further edu-

cation sector via the Further Education Funding Council should be available to help sport governing bodies ensure an increased number of qualified coaches — many of whom, if I understand the position, are volunteers. Mrs Benham suggested other routes were available but Chris Earle, technical director of the CCPR, said grants to sport had been cut significantly in recent years. However, the further education money had "allowed them to make their education and training programmes accessible to a greater number

of people and to ensure the quality of coaches and leaders in the community." In many sports, 90 per cent of coaches were volunteers, although some were paid. "Sport relies on volunteers and it relies on professional training for those volunteers. People can't afford to be full-time coaches," he said. Mrs Shephard's department tried to defuse the row. A spokesman insisted: "A good vocational qualification has nothing to fear." The Further Education Funding Council welcomed the review but said it was not an attack on sport.

Labour fights on the beaches for the browned off voter

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

LABOUR'S secret summer weapons to woo cynical and sun-tanned young people from the clutches of "lying Tories" were revealed yesterday — free sunglasses, a mini frisbee, a stick of rock and a whirly hat. From the sunny sands of Blackpool to the midlands of Graveston, via the less traditional holiday hot spots of Birmingham, Glasgow and Halifax, the latest gimmick to wake up a bored electorate was unleashed yesterday. Next week, Labour attempts to recruit the "lager lout" vote when large consignments of balloons, whirly hats and stick-on badges are pressed into the hands of frazzled British holidaymakers in Benidorm, Majorca, Ibiza and Malaga. For the more refined sunseeker in Alhaurin, Menorca and Alicante, free Labour leaflets can be clipped into a bulging Filofax to help insouciant survive the afternoon siesta. The latest appeal to Britain's youth was launched somewhat apologetically by three middle-aged politicians — deputy leader John



Labour's deputy leader John Prescott enters the holiday spirit at yesterday's press conference

Prescott, white-bearded Frank Dobson and a suitably untanned Mo Mowlam — at a London press conference. Ms Mowlam, who emphasised that the £500,000 campaign was aimed at ending cynicism bred by the Tories among the young, said: "There is nothing I can do about being middle-aged."

while Mr Prescott made it clear that in any beach bathing contest "people are free to choose between Mr Motivator and me." Later, it emerged from Labour Party headquarters that Mr Prescott will not be going near any beaches wearing a whirly hat or brandishing sticks of rock full of E numbers and

marked Tory Lies from end to end. Instead, his only campaigning brief will be talking to expatriates attending the American Democrat Convention. Labour's promise to put up posters along the Costa del Mar denouncing the Tories £10 million "lies" campaign looked yesterday to be as

successful as Neil Kinnock's infamous appearance on Brighton beach, where he fell into the sea. No dates and no sites were available from Labour's headquarters. Indeed, the only evidence of overseas activity was a full-page advert in the Benidorm edition of the Sun. Labour's final apology

for the exercise came from Frank Dobson. "We have to inoculate the public against the insidious American-style techniques which the Tories are using — foreign campaigning techniques financed by foreign money." No doubt the Spaniards will soon be thinking the same about Labour.

War criminal in legal mire

John Hooper in Rome

THE case of the former Nazi, Erich Priebke, was last night in danger of becoming trapped in an international judicial quagmire, despite efforts by the authorities in Italy and Germany to ensure a retrial. The former SS captain, aged 63, who was accused of a leading role in Italy's worst wartime atrocity, was freed by a military court in Rome on Thursday. He was re-arrested in the early hours of yesterday pending an application from Germany for his extradition. Prosecutors in Dortmund have already issued a warrant for his arrest at the request of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre. However, Germany is handicapped because the order for Mr Priebke's extradition from Argentina to Italy last November forbade his being sent to a third country. Argentina could have circumvented the problem by agreeing to the request for extradition that Germany submitted at the same time as Italy, but which has never

been answered. But yesterday the Argentinian foreign minister, Guido di Tella, said his government could no longer consider the demand because it had withdrawn Mr Priebke's resident's permit. The case could be the subject of an appeal in Rome by the prosecution, which would also block extradition. Mr Priebke's Argentinian lawyer said extradition could be fought on the grounds that his client had already been tried, and that his alleged crime had not been committed in Germany. Mr Priebke was dispatched after his re-arrest to the Regina Coeli prison, in which many of his victims spent their last night alive, more than half a century ago. The German admitted taking part in the reprisal killings of 285 men and boys. He was put in solitary confinement for his own protection. The Argentinian authorities announced that, on the orders of President Carlos Menem, Mr Priebke would not be allowed back into the country where he lived for 45 years.

Focus, page 7

'Gun law' cuts crime rate, US study finds

Survey boosts lobby for right to carry concealed weapons

Ian Katz in New York

ALLOWING people to carry concealed firearms helps reduce violent crime, according to a study that will dismay United States gun control campaigners. The comprehensive study by the University of Chicago found that major crimes such as murder, rape and assault fell dramatically in states which have legalised the carrying of concealed handguns.

The findings will add momentum to a movement that has already seen a rise to 31 in the number of states with a "concealed carry" law. Gun advocates insist the right to carry hidden firearms deters criminals because they never know if they will face the muzzle of a gun. The report, to be released next week, for the first time analyses crime statistics for all 3,054 US counties, between 1977 and 1992. In states with the law, murders were down, on average,

by 8.5 per cent. Rapes were down 5 per cent and serious assaults by 7 per cent. Gun control advocates have long insisted that the law increases accidental and impulsive shootings. But Professor John Lott, the author of the study, said he found no evidence of an increase in accidental killings or suicides. "Total deaths unambiguously fall by a large amount," he told the Guardian. "If people are interested in saving lives, they are going to have to allow people to carry concealed handguns." Other studies have differed on the impact of such legislation. One study of five cities last year found the murder

rate increased in three, and fell in only one. But Prof Lott insists his is the first to examine crime figures across the country — adjusted to take into account a general fall in crime. In cities with populations above 250,000, Prof Lott found murder rates dropped after the law by on average 13.5 per cent. The most dramatic falls in murder rates came in areas where the number of women carrying firearms was high. "For every woman that carries a concealed handgun, the murder rate fell by three to four times more than it would if another man had carried a concealed gun."

Prof Lott said the fall in crime did not result from people using guns but from potential criminals trying to avoid confronting them. Property crimes, such as car theft and stealing, increased in states with the law, apparently because criminals switched to lower-risk offences. Tom Wynn, a spokesman for the National Rifle Association, welcomed the findings. "We've always said that 'right to carry' correlates to public safety and this study confirms not only that it correlates but also that it contributes to it."

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Veterans are prepared for fight against council taxes

Ex-servicemen say war pensions must be ring-fenced nationally

Martin Wainwright

THE Government is facing an embarrassing rerun of poll tax protests in the shape of veterans of 21 wars and 54 minor military engagements.

Leaders of a small army of retired soldiers, seamen and RAF personnel decided yesterday to step up a campaign of protest against a legal anomaly which has left some more than £1,000 worse off than their colleagues on council tax charges, depending on where they live, because of the way they are calculated.

"It is nothing short of disgusting, the way these servicemen are being treated by the Government," said Ron Northgreave, head of the Colours Association, a group of retired enlisted men and women leading the campaign.

At his side, at a meeting with MPs in Leeds Civic Hall, sat former lance-corporal Ted Maddison, threatened with prison 53 years after his release from Changi jail in Singapore, and Mike Griffin, who has refused more than 10 times to admit bailiffs trying

in Sheffield last week was told by council tax that the city could not afford the £300,000 cost of a full disregard.

The campaign for consistency is supported by the Royal British Legion, but the Colours Association's blunderbuss methods raise the prospect of high-profile court cases. A petition is being circulated to ask the Imperial War Museum not to consider siting its Northern tanks and weapons outstations in "ugly" council areas — from a list of applicants which includes Wakefield and Barnsley.

"We will win," said Mr Maddison, aged 77, who triumphed in a court case at Barnsley earlier this year when a stipendiary magistrate refused to jail him and his wife, Eunice, also 77, for non-payment of £1,800 council tax arrears.

"I calculate a fair amount from the council tax and pay that. But I'm not going to let them touch my war pension."

The issue may be forced before the pending general election. Labour hinted it may adopt a national policy of disregarding war pensions in calculating council tax.

David Alabaster, foreign affairs spokesman, told yesterday's meeting he would raise the matter with shadow cabinet members Harriet Harman and David Clark.



War veterans, Ted Maddison, right, and Mike Griffin, threatened with jail for council tax arrears

PHOTOGRAPH: TIM SMITH

Surgeon suspended after patient dies

Hospital allowed consultant who carried hepatitis B to operate

Week Chastriary

A SURGEON who was allowed to carry on operating despite the fact that hospital authorities knew he was infected with hepatitis B has been suspended after it was discovered that a woman patient he

operated on died from the illness.

The 77-year-old woman, who has not been named, died last month at Hillingdon Hospital, west London, after undergoing an operation to replace a broken hip.

A hospital spokesman said last night they were aware that the surgeon carried hepatitis

B, but after being assessed, he was considered to be a low level risk to patients.

The spokesman added: "We are still waiting for confirmation on whether the patient contracted hepatitis B from the surgeon. If it is confirmed then someone with an apparent low risk has infected a patient and that is obviously a very serious matter."

The surgeon was assessed by a national committee on hepatitis B... we followed the guidelines and the process the

surgeon underwent was also fully right."

No blood products were used in the operation, but hepatitis B tests were carried out on all theatre staff after the death.

The surgeon, who is not being named, worked at both Hillingdon Hospital and the nearby Mount Vernon Hospital. He has been referred to occupational health doctors for further assessment.

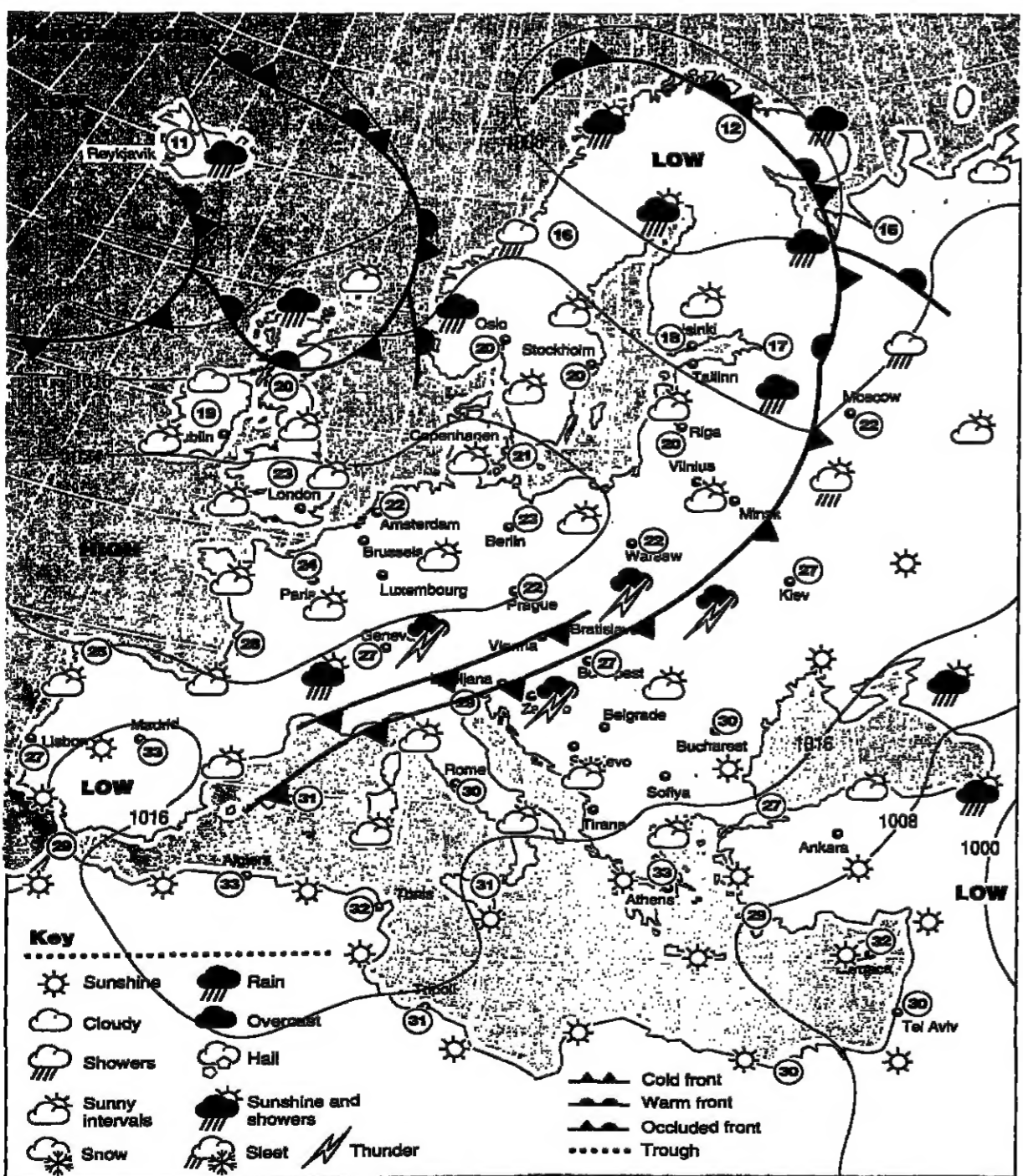
Staff at both hospitals are tracking down the 12 patients operated on by the surgeon

over the past two weeks. They were all at Hillingdon and are being offered accelerated immunisation and an immunoglobulin injection.

"Apart from the 12, we still don't know how many may have been treated, and that is a longer-term issue the two hospitals are working on," the spokesman added.

Only patients who had undergone orthopaedic operations at the two hospitals, in which the surgeon took part, were at risk.

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Other
London	18	SW 12	Partly cloudy	
Manchester	16	SW 10	Partly cloudy	
Birmingham	17	SW 11	Partly cloudy	
Cardiff	15	SW 8	Partly cloudy	
Edinburgh	14	SW 10	Partly cloudy	
Belfast	13	SW 10	Partly cloudy	
Bristol	17	SW 11	Partly cloudy	
Cardiff	15	SW 8	Partly cloudy	
Edinburgh	14	SW 10	Partly cloudy	
Belfast	13	SW 10	Partly cloudy	
Birmingham	17	SW 11	Partly cloudy	
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Around the world

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Other
London	18	SW 12	Partly cloudy	
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Cardiff	15	SW 8	Partly cloudy	
Edinburgh	14	SW 10	Partly cloudy	
Belfast	13	SW 10	Partly cloudy	
Birmingham	17	SW 11	Partly cloudy	
Cardiff	15	SW 8	Partly cloudy	
Edinburgh	14	SW 10	Partly cloudy	
Belfast	13	SW 10	Partly cloudy	

European weather outlook

The far north of Scandinavia will have a bright day with a mix of sunny spells and showers, but it will cloud over in southern and western Norway with rain spreading from the west. Meanwhile Denmark, southern Sweden and Finland should be fine and dry with good sunny spells. Max temp 14 to 20C from north to south.

Lower down France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Austria and southern Germany will again have a mix of sunny spells and scattered showers, but the Low Countries and northern Germany should be dry with banks of mist and sunshine at times. Max temp 20 to 28C from north to south.

The southern half of France will again be hot and mainly sunny with just a few patches of cloud, but northern Spain will have a scattering of hot and sunny spells. Max temp 28-34C.

A ridge of high pressure will continue to keep the whole country mainly sunny and hot today with pleasant sea-breezes on the coasts and islands. Highs 30-35C.

Television and radio — Saturday

BBC 1
7.00am News, 7.30am News, 8.00am News, 8.30am News, 9.00am News, 9.30am News, 10.00am News, 10.30am News, 11.00am News, 11.30am News, 12.00pm News, 12.30pm News, 1.00pm News, 1.30pm News, 2.00pm News, 2.30pm News, 3.00pm News, 3.30pm News, 4.00pm News, 4.30pm News, 5.00pm News, 5.30pm News, 6.00pm News, 6.30pm News, 7.00pm News, 7.30pm News, 8.00pm News, 8.30pm News, 9.00pm News, 9.30pm News, 10.00pm News, 10.30pm News, 11.00pm News, 11.30pm News, 12.00am News, 12.30am News, 1.00am News, 1.30am News, 2.00am News, 2.30am News, 3.00am News, 3.30am News, 4.00am News, 4.30am News, 5.00am News, 5.30am News, 6.00am News, 6.30am News, 7.00am News, 7.30am News, 8.00am News, 8.30am News, 9.00am News, 9.30am News, 10.00am News, 10.30am News, 11.00am News, 11.30am News, 12.00am News, 12.30am News, 1.00am News, 1.30am News, 2.00am News, 2.30am News, 3.00am News, 3.30am News, 4.00am News, 4.30am News, 5.00am News, 5.30am News, 6.00am News, 6.30am News, 7.00am News, 7.30am News, 8.00am News, 8.30am 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Hogg on the rack for mad calf cover-up

Stephen Bates in Brussels

PRESSURE was mounting on Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Secretary, last night to explain why the Government suppressed scientific evidence that cows can pass BSE to their calves for nearly a fortnight, until after a Commons debate on its handling of the crisis.

There were claims that the Government's reluctance to publish the report will lead to a further three-month hiatus in the introduction of its selective slaughtering plan — likely to be pushed well into the autumn — and rising opposition from farmers.

As the repercussions of the report — published on Thursday, a week after the Commons rose for its summer recess — began to spread yesterday, Germany demanded a reinstatement of a total ban on British beef exports, while Pöyry backbench Euro-sceptics called for ministers to reinstate the ill-starred non-cooperation policy.

Experts were cautious about speculating how many extra cattle might have to be slaughtered to take account of the new uncertainties over BSE. But Colin Maclean, chairman of the Meat and Livestock Commission, said: "We are talking about maybe 20,000-30,000 extra cows, but it is very difficult to say because we don't know where Europe is going to draw the line."

The European Commission in Brussels said it would be up to Britain to come up with a figure following its rethink. Franz Fischler, the Austrian agriculture commissioner, warned Mr Hogg in a letter, sent on Thursday but released only yesterday, that the delay in implementing the selective slaughter policy, agreed following the Florence heads of government summit six weeks ago, would delay the lifting of the beef ban.

"Although I understand your reasons, this delay will have the effect of postponing the further reduction in the incidence of BSE which is the cornerstone of our policy... In any case it will be necessary to consider the need for expanding the selective slaughter programme in the

light of this new information," the letter stated. The report — summarising an experiment at the Government's central veterinary laboratory in Weybridge which concluded there was a 10 per cent risk of the transmission of BSE from mothers to their calves — was considered by the expert committee examining BSE on July 19.

But the evidence was not disclosed to the Commons before the House rose a week later, despite a debate on the crisis. The Government at that time did not put forward its proposals for the selective cull, which had been due to start at the beginning of the month. At that stage it had agreed to slaughter 150,000 cattle linked to cases of BSE.

Paul Tyler, the Liberal Democrat agriculture spokesman, claimed the new evidence threw the selective slaughter policy into doubt and could lead to a withdrawal of co-operation by livestock farmers.

He demanded an explanation from Mr Hogg's "deliberate" failure to inform Parliament of the latest scientific evidence during the debate. Mr Tyler, MP for North Cornwall, said: "If MPs from rural areas had known about it last week, I am sure Mr Hogg would have had a much rougher ride. He had better have a good reason for hiding that from Parliament. The selective slaughter plan is in doubt... The first reaction from the farming community has been bitter opposition to any more slaughter."

On BBC radio, a regional German agricultural minister claimed the revelations meant all British beef exports should cease, including the by-products cleared for sale abroad in June.

Berndt Hoehn said: "We would prefer a strict ban against Britain again. The ban can only be lifted when any risk for human beings and animals from BSE can be excluded. For the moment we are far away from this." Bill Cash, the MP for Stafford, accused the commission — which has called merely for Britain to reconsider what should be done — of making outrageous demands, timed deliberately for when Parliament was not sitting.



Rural charm... a typical gite. Such holidays now have an image problem in Britain



Village idyll... Britons, victims of the exchange rate, are turning their backs on France

Brits give 'uncool' gîtes a miss

Lure of lumpy beds, knocking pipes and hordes of insects fading fast, reports Alex Duval Smith

THE word even entered the English language. Taking a holiday in a "gîte" conjured up images of rustic charm, cycling peasants, vineyards at the end of the garden — a corner of France all to oneself. But as fast as you can say "un vin de pays, s'il vous plaît", French self-catering holidays are on their way out. Britons, victims of the exchange rate and enticed elsewhere, are no longer piling into cars to taste the joys of rural France.

Gîtes de France, which has offered self-catering holidays since 1955, is closing its London office after seeing British bookings almost halve in four years. In the cottages of Dordogne, the trend is confirmed. Gisèle Delpech, a farmer in Proissans, used to be able to count on a steady flow of Britons to the three gîtes on her land. She said: "Eighty per cent of my guests were British. This year, maybe one fifth of them are."

"The entries in the guest book are almost entirely in English. Unfortunately, I cannot understand what they say. But British people tell me it is too expensive. Those still coming are renting directly from British people who have bought property here."

Mrs Delpech, who has offered self-catering accommodation through Gîtes de France for 14 years, does not believe the British have lost their love of the area. "They built Mompastier in the 15th century and they still feel very attached to Dordogne's caves, food and châteaux."

She said there is a trend for more Belgians. "I am hoping they will replace the British, but I am sad. The British are so sweet."

Fascal Boulet-Gercoart, director-general of Gîtes de France, claims that even though he is scaling down

the London operation, Britons will continue to rent the 18,000 homes on its books thanks to a new partnership with Brittany Ferries.

But he conceded that gîtes, rented mainly to families, have an uncool image. "People who came with their parents in the 1970s and 1980s think it is outdated to take a gîte."

He denied the what was once considered quaintly rural — lumpy beds, knocking pipes and lots of insects — is now seen as plain primitive. "An increasing number of our homes have swimming pools and the owners are making real efforts to raise standards," he said.

The company arranged 400,000 lettings last year. In common with most tourism specialists — who have observed a 23 per cent drop in British holiday bookings this year — Mr Boulet-Gercoart believes the main reason for the decline is the removal of sterling from the European exchange rate mechanism in 1992. "Sterling has lost 25 per cent against the franc in four years," he said.

The cost factor — which commonly puts a 25cl glass of beer at £3 — appears increasingly to be prompting Britons to spend their holidays at home or in low budget destinations, like Greece, Turkey and Spain.

French tourism officials do not hide their concern. France remains the top tourism destination in the world, with 60 million visitors a year. Among them, the 9 million Britons who come are second only to Germans in francophilia.

Figures published yesterday showed tourism in all countries in all sectors from campsites to five-star hotels — is in sharp decline, even compared to last year when a terrorist bombing campaign put people off.

A tourism spokeswoman, Aline Carason, said: "In our marketing, we are aware that we need to tackle two areas: the belief that France is expensive and people are unfriendly."

Sci-fi thriller plots Olympic security

A novel reveals the secret operation to fight nuclear terror at the Atlanta Games

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

A THRILLER novel about a nuclear terrorist plot at the Atlanta Olympics has become a factual source on the latest developments in United States security.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) ordered 40 copies of *Red Mercury* by Max Barclay, a novel FBI agent Bill Clinton read before visiting the site of the Games. Despite its lurid sci-fi plot, many of the details are real.

The book discloses that a team with PhDs in nuclear physics has been standing by at a secret location. The Nuclear Emergency Search Team (Nest) comprises volunteers from Los Alamos, the US laboratory that produced the first atom bomb, and other government research centres.

Supporting Nest is the Technical Escort Unit (TEU), a secret group of much-inoculated army experts on chemical and biological warfare that assisted Japanese authorities in last year's gas attack on the Tokyo underground.

Watching over everything is a surveillance satellite permanently poised over Atlanta to produce "battlefield" imagery to assist troop deployment in the event of a catastrophic terrorist attack. In keeping with the clandestine

tone, Max Barclay turns out to be Ben Sherwood, aged 32, a Harvard and Oxford-educated non-fiction writer, who assumed a pen-name for this first novel.

He was not hopeful of gaining access to information when he made research inquiries of security executives at the FBI, CIA and Pentagon. But the shadowy counter-terrorists seemed eager to disclose the first time their latest technology and tactics.

"They are generally not allowed to talk to journalists," Mr Sherwood said. "But they'd spent years in absolute obscurity preparing for these 17 days of Games, and they had a good story to tell. They wanted some recognition."

There are 57 law enforcement and paramilitary units at the Games, with 30,000 personnel — three for every athlete. "There's a lot of rivalry, so that was another motive to describe their achievements," Mr Sherwood said.

Mr Sherwood spent 10 days at the Games and felt secure, but left Atlanta just before the park bomb that killed a woman and injured 110 people. He admits that "no system is foolproof". But given the sophisticated technology available, the bombing raises disturbing questions.

With all the hi-tech experts planning for smuggled nuclear clear weaponry, they were caught out by "Bubba's bomb", the crude device that the FBI believes was placed by an amateur. Yet this was the most likely US terrorist scenario in view of the Oklahoma City bombing last year.

Martin Woolcott, Outlook page 14



French prices, such as £3 for a glass of beer, appear to be prompting Britons to stay at home or go to cheaper countries

Old Bill's lunch trip ends 1,008 miles and 37 hours later — 'spiked' by police on the M1

John Ezard

IT WAS one of those nice, easy little trips you plan on holiday. Bill Alexander, a retired traffic policeman, set off with his wife, Cathleen, from their Hereford hotel to drive 16 miles to Ross-on-Wye for lunch.

That was on a Saturday morning. Their journey ended 1,008 miles and 37 hours later — sleepless, increasingly desperate hours. Police stopped their car with a metal-spiked roadway "stringer" at 1am the following Monday. A totally lost Mr Alexander, aged 69, was driving the wrong way down the M1 near Barnsley, Yorkshire.

He and his wife, aged 70, have suffered for years from anger and high blood pressure, for which they had no medication in the car. After Mr Alexander's odyssey, his GP diagnosed him as also having hardening of the arteries, leading to confusion.



Lost in Wales... ex-traffic policeman Bill Alexander

Yesterday their son, also named Bill Alexander, bitterly attacked Yorkshire police and Barnsley magistrates for subjecting his father to a dangerous driving case because of the M1 incident without waiting for a medical report to be prepared.

He said his parents were dragged out of their car on the motorway, despite telling police they had heart conditions. "There ought to be more controls, particularly on the way the police treat vulnerable people. This was not justice."

Mr Alexander senior admitted the charge and was disqualified from driving for two years. He cannot remember what routes he took. But he painstakingly kept petrol receipts, which show he apparently drove through Ross-on-Wye without realising and turned north near Oxford.

From there he drove to Manchester — 160.6 miles by country roads, according to the AA yesterday. At some stage the frantic couple tried to reach their home in St Helens, Lancashire. They kept medication there as well as in the Hereford hotel.

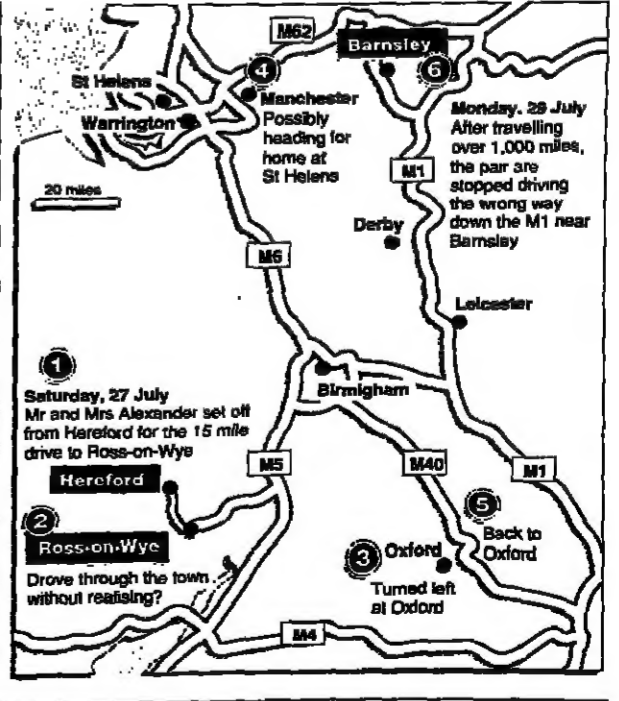
But somehow they drove back to Oxford, and from Oxford to Barnsley. Receipts

show they twice bought petrol in both Oxford and Manchester. Otherwise their routes are untraceable, except that Mr Alexander complained of being baffled by Welsh language road signs.

This indicates they travelled west as well as north and south. They stopped for one meal. Mr Alexander said: "I didn't have a clue where we were and my wife can't drive so she didn't know either. I did have a map but I'd lent it to my son and I didn't have it with me."

"We were told Ross-on-Wye wasn't far from the hotel. We asked for directions three times but they must have been wrong. We carried on driving through the night."

His son said Mr Alexander would have been willing to surrender his licence in court. Instead, the conduct of the police and the court meant he would be free to drive in two years. "But I doubt if he will ever drive again," the son added.



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Report backs easier entry for US cash, but Bottomley is lukewarm on ideas to boost film industry

Hollywood vision for British cinema

Dan Glaister on a new look at big screen

COLIN Welland started it all off when he cried "The British are coming", anticipating a British invasion of Hollywood as he collected the Oscar for Chariots Of Fire in 1981. It never happened, and the British film industry has since seen more false dawns than new films.

Boyd Farrow, editor of Screen International, said: "Far from addressing the problems here, Mrs Bottomley's comments make it easier for the US to make films here. That can be fantastic for the economy, but most of the profits go abroad."

Mrs Bottomley was lukewarm about Sir Peter Middleton's report, calling it a "thoughtful contribution to the debate".

The report, commissioned by the Department of National Heritage, called for the creation of three mini-studios with lottery money, which would produce and distribute films. They could eventually form one studio to rival the Americans. The aim would be for the studio to develop over time into a major international film-making and distributing company. Hollywood has a stranglehold over much of the film industry because it controls distribution and exhibition as well as production.

Sir Peter, chairman of investment bank BZW, said: "People complain that Hollywood is run by accountants. Well, we could do with a bit of that. Films are big business and you have to know about marketing and distribution as well as how to actually make a film."

On a trip to Hollywood last week, the National Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, said: "I am committed to broadening and deepening the UK film industry by promoting co-production between the UK and the US." She told the industry magazine Screen International that American studios had told her that "one of the things that needed looking at was making it simpler to form a British company".

But director Ken Loach said that precautions should be taken to prevent Britain turning into a period costume centre for the American film industry. "We could turn ourselves into heritage comic book turns for the Americans," said the director of Land and Freedom and Kes. "We could end up presenting a parody of ourselves for the benefit of the Americans and that's a most demeaning position."

"We're not trying to replicate Hollywood. There's nowhere near enough money for that. But we would like to adopt the principle of doing things on a large scale and spreading risks for investors. British film-makers have traditionally asked investors to back a single film, but this makes no economic sense because of the risk involved. We [BZW] would never invest in a single film, but we would invest in a studio that was, say, handling 12 films because the risk is spread."

Leader comment, page 14; Peter Middleton interviewed, Outlook page 18



House of America in production... seven backers had to be found to raise the modest £1.3 million budget

PHOTOGRAPH MARK TULLIE

Producer battles with hotch-potch funding

'Profits must be ploughed back to create local movie culture'

Stuart Millar

SHERYL Crown is well aware of how it feels to be at the sharp end of raising finance for a film. House of America, a Welsh film which she is producing, has just finished shooting and is due for release next spring.

"Putting together a film in this country is a very difficult process if you don't have one funder who can put up all the cash," she said.

House of America, written by local playwright Ed Thomas and directed by Marc Evans, is about impoverished kids from the Welsh valleys who fantasise about the United States after their father abandons them for a better life across the Atlantic. It is part of a new breed of contemporary English language films to emerge from Wales — a factor which complicated funding.

"The funding is a real hotch-potch. To put it together we had to write lots of letters, knock on lots of doors, and hassle lots of people."

"We were lucky to have a really brilliant first-time writer and director. We were the first to get Welsh lottery money, and we were lucky enough to receive the Dutch money as part of a reciprocal deal. That gave us the first big chunk, making it much easier to open doors."

First-time feature directors are even more difficult to fund. People don't know what they are going for if there are no stars attached," said Ms Crown.

"We've made a lot of films this year but what about next year? If the lottery money disappeared, God forbid, then the whole thing would collapse without the infrastructure to hold it up, and all we would be left with is American money."

"What we need is an infrastructure to transform British film from a cottage industry to a major industry. And we can't do that if we don't plough the profits back into production."

"It would be great as Europeans not to have to be dependent on the Americans. It would be fantastic if we could create our own film culture and didn't have to make American films."



Colin Welland, writer of Chariots Of Fire, after tempting fate with his 'British are coming' cry at the Oscars

Pub landlord outed as first gay in Archers

News taken calmly says Andrew Culf

FIRST there were rumours about Jean-Paul in the Grey Gables kitchen, and Shane in Nelson's Wine Bar. There were even whispers about Kenton Archer during his long absence in Australia.

Now Radio 4's daily soap The Archers has its first officially declared gay character — Sean Myerson, the new landlord of Ambridge's Cat and Fiddle pub.

So far the news has been taken calmly by the programme's 3.75 million listeners, whose vision of a rural idyll has been shattered over the past two years by the car crash death of Mark Hebden, an armed post office raid and the jailing of Susan Carter.

The BBC said it had received no protest calls after Thursday night's episode, or yesterday's repeat. Some listeners had already assumed the landlord, who referred to his co-landlord Peter as his "partner", was gay, while others assumed it was a business relationship.

Vanessa Whitburn, the programme's editor, who does not want The Archers to become an anachronistic museum piece, said: "I hope listeners will react to it positively. It is only part of his personality."

The "outing" of Sean's character is just the latest attempt by radio and television soaps to outdo each other with sensational storylines. Last night Channel 4's Brookside, which courted controversy 18 months ago with television soap's first lesbian kiss — to be followed by ITV's Emmerdale — was braced for complaints over an incest story.

Seven million viewers saw Nat (John Sandford) and Georgia Simpson (Helen Grace), who are brother and sister, in a naked incestuous clinch, when their Brookside neighbour burst in on them.

Mal Young, series producer, said: "The subject matter has shocked people from the day we first announced it. I'm sure we will get some complaints. People will always blame TV for things going wrong in the world."

"It is a little more graphic and it marks a peak in the storyline... It is a very interesting and very complicated subject."

He added: "We don't want to promote incest. But can they be classed as sexual deviants? It is not about abuse — it is about where lines can be drawn in sexuality."

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Anger over gay sex workers ad

David Brindley, Social Services Correspondent

A HEALTH Service trust was under fire yesterday for seeking to recruit two gay men to carry out Aids prevention work among homosexuals in "public sex environments".

Tory backbenchers queued up to criticise Barnet Healthcare trust after it was lampooned in the Daily Mail over its recruitment advertisement, outlining the experimental "Cottaging or Cruising Project (COC)".

The north London trust's chief executive, Murray Duncanson, last night defended the scheme. He said it was in line with Department of Health thinking, wholly government-funded and would save money in the long run by helping stop gay men contracting Aids.

The advertisement, which appeared in the Guardian, seeks two gay or bisexual men to act as "Aids education unit field workers for Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)". It offers a nine-month contract, paying between £17,093 and £19,790 for a

36-hour week. The workers, who will work in Barnet, Brent and Harrow, will need "a good understanding of cottaging and cruising issues".

In the Daily Mail Richard Littlejohn wrote: "Taxpayers' money is to be spent on employing a pair of homosexual or bisexual men to hang around public lavatories and parks, chatting to men who go there for casual sex and asking if there is anything they can do for them."

Tory backbenchers weighed in. Terry Dickson (Hayes and Harlington), said: "This is a dreadful waste of public money. Homosexuals are perverts and this is just... sending more perverts round to tell them how to do it better."

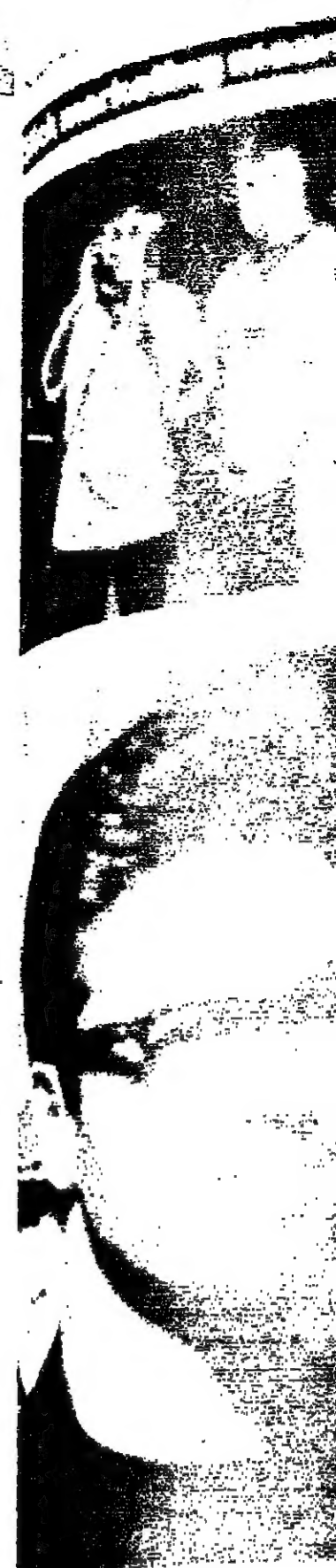
Peter Tatchell, of the gay rights group OutRage, said many homosexuals were not on the gay scene. "This outreach work is... attempting to save lives," he said.

Mr Duncanson said the scheme was far from unique and funded entirely from government Aids grants. Studies showed men who went cottaging and cruising were least likely to practise safer sex and therefore most at risk.

Lynn Barber joins the Observer and begins by reviewing Sunday's television, tomorrow in **The Observer**

The curious thing about the bloke's bloke moustache is that as far as I can tell, no woman in recorded history has ever actually liked it.

Continued on page 15



We're looking for who wants to writing fiction

كلمة الجلال

Slick marketing means singles are instant hits and then plummet, writes Nick Varley



Left: David Baddiel, Frank Skinner and the Lightning Seeds' Ian Brondie together for England's official album of Euro 96; and right: the Fugees



'Loophole' fails to save embryos

Sarah Boseley

THE regulatory body governing fertility treatment refused to delay the destruction of thousands of frozen embryos yesterday, despite claims by lawyers on the side that they had found a loophole in the law.

At an emergency hearing before a high court judge on Thursday, a childless woman whose estranged husband would not sign the papers to extend storage of her embryo was granted an injunction against a London clinic.

The cluster of cells will be safeguarded for 21 days to allow a full hearing. Her solicitor Graham Ross, a specialist in medical cases, based in Liverpool, says the woman's egg was fertilised with her husband's sperm before the 1991 law, restricting storage to five years, came into force.

He claims hundreds of couples whose embryos have been destroyed will be eligible for compensation if his client wins. It was reported yesterday that other women may also have been granted injunctions, but no details were available.

Mr Ross asked the Human Fertilisation and Embology Authority to instruct all clinics to postpone further destruction of embryos until after the case.

The authority refused. Mr Ross said its attitude was "absolutely appalling". Mark Salmon, a spokesman for the authority, said: "The authority took the independent advice of lawyers and of the Department of Health. The authority did not believe, he said, that any loopholes had been missed. The issue of consent given before the 1991 legislation had been actively

considered." Peter Brinsden, a consultant at the Bourn Hall clinic in Cambridge, agreed it was unlikely that the court case would change anything.

"People always think they are going to find loopholes. The law is so complex. I have been involved with it for six or seven years. A lawyer who is new to it is going to have difficulties. I believe it is pretty watertight."

Any challenges should have been put up weeks ago, he said. "We have struggled like anything to have the law changed. In May, it was altered so that couples could get an extension of the storage period to 10 years.

He and his staff were unhappy to be destroying embryos. "We have just completed it," he said. Some 800 embryos belonging to 250 couples had been allowed to perish. "It has been a major logistical and emotional nightmare, mainly for my colleagues in embryology. I have just spoken to one of them and she is visibly distressed by the whole thing. They spend their entire lives trying to create embryos and help people."

He had pressed for storage to be automatic for the reproductive life of the woman for whom the embryos were intended, which would probably be for 15 or 20 years. He hoped things would change before the next five-year cut.

"I think over the next four years, we will gain further experience with the law as it stands and pressure will be brought. A lot more people are aware and educated about the problems now. I hope people will reconsider the matter before the end of the next five-year period and we can make it all more patient-friendly."

I could be wrong. Outlook, page 15



George Michael has topped charts PHOTOGRAPH ALAN REVELL

Volatile pop charts 'losing credibility'

IT MIGHT just be a mid-life crisis. Or maybe, to paraphrase one of their better known visitors, they want to die before they get old.

Either way, the pop charts — the soundtrack to youth for 40 years — are falling into disrepute. Tomorrow Robbie Williams' debut solo single enters the charts, following his departure from Take That. But many in the music business believe that if Williams enters at number one, it could accelerate the decline in the reputation of the charts.

If it becomes an instant number one, the single would be the 17th of the last 21 new best sellers to debut at the top. It would also be the 31st record to go straight in at the top in the last 18 months. In contrast it took 37 years from the charts' first countdown in 1952 to notch up the first 21.

The volatility spreads right through the charts: up to half of it changes each week because of new entries. One week last month half the top 10 were new entries, for the first time. Often the high new entries drop as swiftly as they appeared.

Now critics within the music industry are becoming vocal as Sir Cliff at Centre Court and as sneering as Johnny Rotten circa 1977, warning there needs to be a radical overhaul if the charts are to survive. More importantly, with the industry's annual net foreign earnings standing at \$571 million, some fear the countdown's falling prestige is worsening the chances of British acts abroad.

Derek Green, chairman of China Records, one of the biggest independent labels and a member of the British Phonographic Industry council, said: "If you're trying to break an act in America, you say 'They were number two in the British charts last week'. The Americans say 'Great. What about this week?' And you have to say, 'Er, 27'."

Hit parade

Table listing top hits including Michael Jackson - Earth Song, George Michael - Just to A, Babylon Zoo - Spaceman, Oasis - Don't Look Back in Anger, Take That - How Deep is Your Love, The Prodigy - Firestarter, Mark Morrison - Return of the Mack, George Michael - Fast Love, Gino G - Oh Ahn Just a Little Bit, Rednex - Cinnamon and the Lightning Seeds - These Lovers, The Fugees - Killing Me Softly, Rednex - Cinnamon and the Lightning Seeds - These Lovers, The Fugees - Killing Me Softly, Gary Barlow - Forever Love, The Spice Girls - Wannabe.

Doctors offer positive diagnosis as TV bosses suggest medical show is in terminal state

Andrew Gull Media Correspondent

JUNIOR doctors have joined the clamour to rescue Cardiac Arrest, the BBC's acclaimed hospital drama, from its deathbed. Officially, the BBC says the

future of the series — an uncompromising portrait of the chaotic working conditions and bed-hopping antics of NHS staff — is under review. Dr Roderick Dunn, a senior house officer in surgery at Plymouth, said Cardiac Arrest "expresses the way junior doctors feel, and raises issues such as their lack of sleep".

Ged Mercurio, who wrote the series under the name John MacLure and worked for three years as a junior doctor before quitting to become a writer, said: "It seems the programme does not have a future on BBC1."

However, he said BBC Scotland and the independent company World Production were both keen to make another series, and he believed BBC's new controller, Mark Thompson, could give it the kiss of life.

It has had steady audiences of around 6 million, but this is regarded as insufficient in the ratings battle with ITV. "Junior doctors are a small part of the audience, but their support has been gratifying," said Mr Mercurio.



Helen Baxendale: work load may force her to quit

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Libel award of £20,000 bankrupts cult watcher

David Pallister

THE head of a charity that monitors cults and self-improvement groups has been made bankrupt by a California-based organisation he criticised in Canada 14 years ago.

In the High Court, Ian Haworth of the Cult Information Centre said he was unable to pay the £20,000 libel damages awarded against him in Canada in an action by Landmark Education International Inc.

Landmark, which changed its name from Werner Erhard & Associates International Inc in 1991, has offices in London. It offers intensive management courses. Mr Erhard was founder of the controversial EST group in the 1970s.

The organisation originally complained about critical remarks by Mr Haworth at a Canadian university in 1982, reported in the local newspaper. He ran a group there called Council on Mind Abuse. In 1990, after returning to England, he was told the libel action had been heard in 1989 in his absence. He received a statutory demand for the money, including interest, last February. In April Landmark was granted the right to proceed with his bankruptcy.

Blair puts final touches to Labour's front bench team

TONY Blair has completed the changes and appointments to his full front bench team. This is now the final list. Names followed by an asterisk indicate an elected member of the shadow cabinet.

- Leaders: Tony Blair; Deputy Leader: John Prescott; Shadow Cabinet: (Public Services) Derek Foss; (Health) Richard Caborn; (Treasury and Economic Affairs) Gordon Brown; (Agriculture) Dawn Primorchi; (Foreign Affairs) Robin Cook; (Justice) Joyce Quin; (Education) David Blunkett; (Environment) Stephen Byers; (Energy) Peter Hain; (Home Affairs) Jack Straw; (International Development) George Young; (Labour Relations) Peter Hain; (Law) Lord Chancellor: Lord Irvine; (Local Government) David Blunkett; (Northern Ireland) Stephen Byers; (Pensions) Peter Hain; (Regional Development) Peter Mandelson; (Science) Peter Mandelson; (Small Business) Peter Mandelson; (Transport) Peter Mandelson; (Wales) Peter Mandelson; (Work and Pensions) Peter Mandelson; (Youth Affairs) Peter Mandelson; (European Affairs) Peter Mandelson; (International Trade) Peter Mandelson; (Foreign Affairs) Robin Cook; (Justice) Joyce Quin; (Education) David Blunkett; (Environment) Stephen Byers; (Energy) Peter Hain; (Home Affairs) Jack Straw; (International Development) George Young; (Labour Relations) Peter Hain; (Law) Lord Chancellor: Lord Irvine; (Local Government) David Blunkett; (Northern Ireland) Stephen Byers; (Pensions) Peter Hain; (Regional Development) Peter Mandelson; (Science) Peter Mandelson; (Small Business) Peter Mandelson; (Transport) Peter Mandelson; (Wales) Peter Mandelson; (Work and Pensions) Peter Mandelson; (Youth Affairs) Peter Mandelson; (European Affairs) Peter Mandelson; (International Trade) Peter Mandelson.

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Exhausted president 'needs two months of rest' Shadow of Deng hangs over Yeltsin

James Meek in Moscow

THE danger of Russia being left for years with a physically exhausted leader loomed again yesterday as one of Boris Yeltsin's closest aides said the president was "colossally tired" and needed two months of peace and quiet to recover from the strains of his re-election campaign.

The warning by Georgi Satarov, a veteran Yeltsin loyalist who advised on political tactics, raised the question whether Russia's feuding islands of power could control the country under a leader — like Deng Xiaoping in China — ailing and absent from the scene.

Mr Yeltsin has a long history of ill health and drinking, and has suffered two heart attacks this year. After astonishing the world with his barnstorming campaign tours in spring, he suffered a relapse of his mysterious condition early last month and has scarcely left the Barkhiva sanatorium outside Moscow since then.

He has been seen on television in brief, carefully staged meetings with senior administration officials. Appointments and decrees have continued to be issued in his name.

But Mr Satarov gave the impression that Mr Yeltsin would need all his strength to take part in next Friday's presidential inauguration ceremony at the Kremlin, and

that he would need a long time to recover.

"He is not as well now, of course, as he was in May," the aide told the daily newspaper Sevdenya. "But he is in excellent intellectual and psychological shape."

"He is colossally tired. You remember his election campaign? He is an elderly man, after all. There is no way to avoid it. He'll need probably two months to get over this strain. It only needs peace and quiet."

'He's elderly. There's no way to avoid it, his age is bound to show'

In a clue to who was at the helm of the ship of state, Mr Satarov said Mr Yeltsin had given the new head of administration, Anatoly Chubais, the leading role in forming the new Kremlin team.

If Mr Yeltsin is incapacitated, or at least unable to play a public role, for a long period, the prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, and the president's security overlord, Alexander Lebed, will have to settle between them who has executive power — with Mr Chubais acting as intermediary. All three have visited their ailing patron at the sanatorium.

It is possible that a troika

agency could endure if Russia was more stable. General Lebed in charge of army reform and law and order, Mr Chernomyrdin looking after the economy, and Mr Chubais protecting Mr Yeltsin's image as head of state.

But emergencies such as the Chechen conflict and the unpaid wages crisis, which is leading to growing industrial unrest, cut across portfolios. Besides, Mr Chernomyrdin cannot yet rely on parliament to confirm him as head of the next government.

The Kremlin guessing game is being played out against a curious vacuum in the political process as the main opposition — the communist-nationalist movement led by Gennady Zyuganov — tries to find its bearings after its defeat.

The founding congress of a new umbrella opposition group, the National-Patriotic Union of Russia, is due next week, but the movement is certain to be divided between those wanting to adopt a centrist position and those hoping to harness the anger of millions of unpaid workers.

Similarly, attempts to form a broad anti-communist, centre-right coalition in parliament have foundered, leaving a mass of representatives without a clear figurehead or ideology. Mr Yeltsin has succeeded in accruing power by winning the election and creating a strong presidential role in the new Russian constitution. His own constitution, however, seems more likely to let him down.



A Russian Mi-8 helicopter carrying supplies for guards on the Tajik-Afghan border is guided by a smoke flare to a landing pad. The Kremlin is backing Tajikistan's government, which is fighting a guerrilla insurrection, and has 25,000 troops on the border.

Fish loophole heats tempers in frozen sea

Jon Henley in Helsinki

A SMALL triangle of sea frozen for nine months of the year is at the centre of a bitter row between Norway, Russia and Iceland about who may fish its rich stocks of cod and flounder.

"It hasn't exactly come to blows yet, but there is a lot of ill feeling," said Halvard Johannessen, a resource management adviser at the Norwegian fisheries ministry. "We hope we can settle it peacefully, but it won't be easy."

Squeezed between Norwegian and Russian national protection areas around the Arctic islands of Spitsbergen, the aptly-named Loop Hole is a 300-mile patch of international water in the middle of the inhospitable but environmentally precious Barents Sea.

As such, Iceland claims its trawlers are entitled to fish there. But Norway and Russia, which border the Barents Sea and have traditionally regulated the annual catch from it, say Iceland's forays into the international zone are severely disrupting the delicate balance of fish stocks in the sea as a whole.

Norway and Russia take the lion's share of the Barents Sea catch, agreeing a quota for each of a handful of other fleets which have long fished there — including Poland, Greenland, the Faeroe Islands and the European Union, which takes just 4 per cent.

But Norway claims that last year's total cod quota of 700,000 tonnes was exceeded by at least 40,000 tonnes, due almost entirely to intense fishing by Icelandic trawlers in the Loop Hole.

"This could have very dramatic consequences for the

stock," Mr Johannessen said. "It was heavily over-fished and we had to set severe restrictions on our own fleets. Now it's in excellent condition and it faces the same threat — through none of our doing. There's nothing we can legally do to stop it."

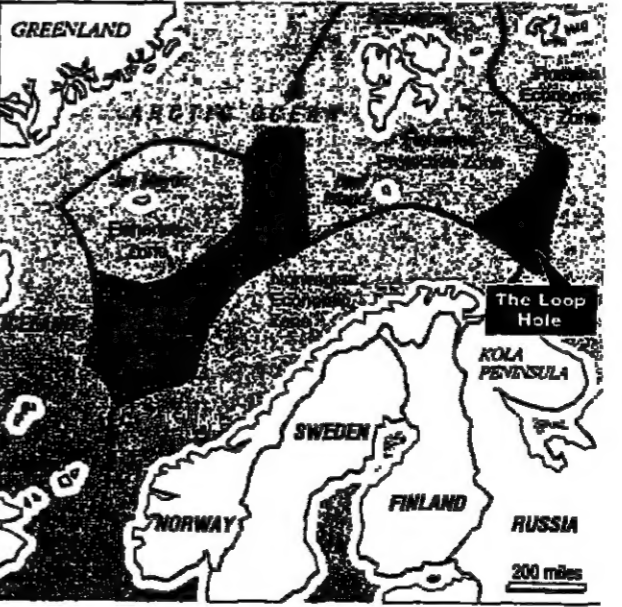
Iceland, which the Barents fisheries group claims has not established "traditional rights" to fish in the region, says environmental arguments are a disguise for an economic card. "Iceland is fishing for cod in this international area, just as Norway and Russia fish in international waters off Iceland," said Halldor Agnirsson, the foreign minister.

"We are very aware of our duty not to over-fish, and we want to agree a quota. But there has been a reluctance to accept that Iceland, a nation in the middle of the north Atlantic that is so dependent on fisheries, is entitled to fish there at all."

As the two-month fishing season begins in the brief Arctic summer, angry Norwegian fishermen are urging Olo to extend their zone to include the disputed Loop Hole. Twenty-five Icelandic trawlers have been sighted so far, and more are expected, despite disappointing early-season catches.

If the dispute cannot be resolved by negotiation, Mr Agnirsson said, it could be one of the first to be heard by a new United Nations tribunal on the law of the sea, being set up in Hamburg. "We are confident our rights will be recognised," he said.

Denmark yesterday called for urgent talks with Iceland to defuse a row over fishing rights in the Denmark Strait lying between Greenland and Iceland.



Krajina Serbs 'still terrorised'

Julian Borger in Sarajevo

THE few elderly Serbs who cling to their homes in the Krajina region of Croatia despite a Croatian army offensive a year ago are still being terrorised, the Red Cross and human rights organisations said yesterday.

In separate reports, Human Rights Watch (HRW) in New York accused the government of allowing "looting, burning and killing" to continue in Krajina despite its promises of protection and The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) alleged that "soft terrorism" was being carried out against the region's aged Serbs.

The scathing reports were an embarrassment to Croatia's president, Franjo Tudjman, on the day he met President Clinton in Washington. Croatia is trying to renegotiate entry to the Council of Europe after being barred in May for human rights infringements.

Mr Tudjman has also been criticised by mediators in Bosnia for failing to rein in an emboldened to Croatia's president, Franjo Tudjman, on the day he met President Clinton in Washington. Croatia is trying to renegotiate entry to the Council of Europe after being barred in May for human rights infringements.

US officials had hoped that, after meeting Mr Clinton, Mr Tudjman would call on the Mostar Croats to end their boycott of the city council. But at a meeting yesterday in the Bosnian coastal town of Neum, Bosnian Croat members of Mr Tudjman's Croatian Democratic Union resented their refusal to co-operate with Muslims.

The European Union says it will abort its two-year peace and reconciliation mission in Mostar if no compromise is reached by Sunday.

On August 4 last year the Croatian army launched a blitzkrieg attack on Serb rebel positions and retook the Krajina region, which lies along the border with Bosnia.

About 200,000 Serbs fled, leaving only 10,000, mostly elderly, people too weak or poor to leave their villages. More than 200 were killed or disappeared in the months that followed as gangs of Croatian thugs ransacked Krajina, pillaging and burning Serb villages.

After an international uproar, the government increased the police presence in the area last October, but according to reports by the ICRC, HRW and the Croatian Helsinki Committee the threat to Serb survivors has not diminished.

Yesterday's ICRC report said: "Criminal acts and abuses continue to be carried out on a regular basis against the most vulnerable amongst the remaining (Serb) popula-

tion and there has been no improvement noted in the protection situation... Returnees have had their houses burnt down in arson attacks and there have been serious injuries and deaths caused by deliberately planted explosive devices."

Francis Bolton, an ICRC spokesman in Belgrade, said: "In Krajina, there is what I would call soft terrorism."

The ICRC report, citing Croatian government figures, said 89 houses were destroyed by arson or explosives and 12 people killed. Yesterday's Human Rights Watch report said 80 Serbs were executed in Krajina between November and April.

"The scope and time-frame of the abuses indicate that the Croatian government both was aware of the looting, burning and killing and allowed it to continue with impunity," the HRW report said.

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Priebke sows war crimes confusion

After the huge outcry over an Italian military court's ruling that the former SS officer could not be punished, **Ian Traynor** in Bonn reports on German attempts to extradite him and the implications for the future conduct of war tribunals

THE legal limbo in which the former SS officer Erich Priebke sits, two days after an Italian court ruled him unpunishable despite his role in Italy's worst second world war atrocity, raises questions about the future conduct of war crimes trials.

Amid a chorus of condemnation from German Jews, Holocaust survivors and politicians, German authorities yesterday asked Italy to hold Priebke in custody pending extradition to Germany to face a new trial for murder. But the fate of the 63-year-old, who admitted taking part in the 1944 massacre of 335 Italians, including 75 Jews, was shrouded in legal confusion after an Italian military court pronounced him guilty but ineligible for sentencing as his crime was covered by a statute of limitations.

Although still in Italian custody last night, Priebke was pronounced a "free man" on Thursday when the military court judges accepted the defence plea that the former Nazi was following orders when he compiled a list of 335 men and boys to be murdered in the Ardeatine caves outside Rome in 1944 in reprisal for the killing of 33 Germans by Italian partisans.

That ruling set off storms of protest across Europe and the United States yesterday and raised questions about the future conduct of war crimes

trials 51 years after the Holocaust.

Close observers of the complex legal and moral issues involved in war crimes trials also noted the unfortunate timing of the Italian verdict, as Dusan Tadic is being tried in The Hague for alleged war crimes in former Yugoslavia.

The Priebke case was the first such trial in Italy since the immediate post-war

'This verdict is fatal for the future because ethically it excuses the murder of civilians'

years. Like the former SS captain, countless war criminals from Nazi Germany and European satellites escaped to sanctuary in Latin America via Italy at the end of the war.

For campaigners for justice for the Nazis' victims the most disturbing aspect of the Priebke case was the judges' acceptance of the "following orders" defence, a ruling that flew in the face of the case history of Nazi war crimes trials.

"Even if an order is given, the command to kill a child is clearly inhuman, criminal, and has nothing to do with war," said Michel Friedmann,

a leading German Jew and lawyer. "If a court effectively approves such a killing, what are we supposed to do about kids being massacred in Yugoslavia?"

Simon Wiesenthal, the Vienna-based veteran Nazi-hunter, described the Italian verdict as "problematic". Ignatz Bubis, the leader of Germany's Jewish community, said the Italian court had dealt "a punch in the face to the victims."

But the court's ruling that Priebke's crime would go unpunished since it fell under Italy's statute of limitations, may strike a chord with British peers who fought to defeat Britain's first War Crimes Bill last year and were only overruled by the invocation for the first time in 40 years of the Parliament Act which got the bill on to the statute book.

Pierce resistance from the House of Lords, including from former Nuremberg prosecutors, cited the age of would-be defendants as one reason for letting matters rest and argued strongly that the War Crimes Act was pointless since it was being enacted 50 years after the Holocaust.

Nonetheless, no alleged war criminals have been tried in Britain although the first such trial, of 86-year-old Skymon Seratinowicz, of Surrey, is expected to go ahead in January. He is accused of murdering Jews in German-occupied Belarus during the second world war.

After the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals, most countries have been reluctant to pursue war criminals vigorously.

The wave of German prosecutions in the 1950s and 1960s are generally seen to have been less than comprehensive. The French only started to try to deal with war criminals in their midst in the 1980s with the trial of Klaus Barbie, the "butcher of Lyons". And Britain only last year passed legislation enabling it to prosecute war criminals resident in Britain, although few trials are likely to follow.

But while campaigners and legal experts deplored the Italian verdict on moral grounds, they generally agreed that the legal impact of

the ruling would be minimal, except in Italy. They also pointed out that unlike in Germany or most other countries, the Italians had chosen to bring the case before a military rather than a criminal court.

The quest to punish Priebke for crimes he admits he perpetrated and for which he shows little remorse now turns to Germany.

A formal extradition request from the Germans is expected in the coming days. But several legal hurdles need to be surmounted before the request can be regarded as valid and even then German justice sources admitted they may not be able to put him on trial.

The justice ministry of the German state of North-Rhine Westphalia yesterday asked the Italian authorities to keep Priebke in custody pending the response to an extradition request.

Priebke fled to Argentina at the end of the war, where he lived under his own name until earlier this year. Last year he admitted on television his part in the 1944 massacre, at which point Italy and Germany issued extradition requests.

But his dispatch to Italy for trial meant he could not be extradited to a third country for another trial. The German request has to be cleared by Argentina, which seems to be washing its hands of the affair.

But German sources said they were not sure whether or not Priebke had been acquitted by the Italian court. The "guilty but free" verdict possibly meant he had not been acquitted, in which case he could still be tried in Germany.

The Germans say they want to try him for murder, a crime for which there is no statute of limitation. But if Italian clarification follows that Priebke has been acquitted, the Germans cannot try him again.

Mr Friedmann said the issue of Nazi war crimes was as topical and urgent as ever. "We're not talking about the past. This verdict is fatal for today and tomorrow because ethically it excuses the murder of civilians."



Erich Priebke is escorted out of Rome's military court after the controversial ruling to acquit him of war crimes. He was re-arrested hours later. PHOTOGRAPH BY MASSIMO SANGUINETTI

'If a court approves such a killing, what are we supposed to do about kids being massacred in Yugoslavia?'

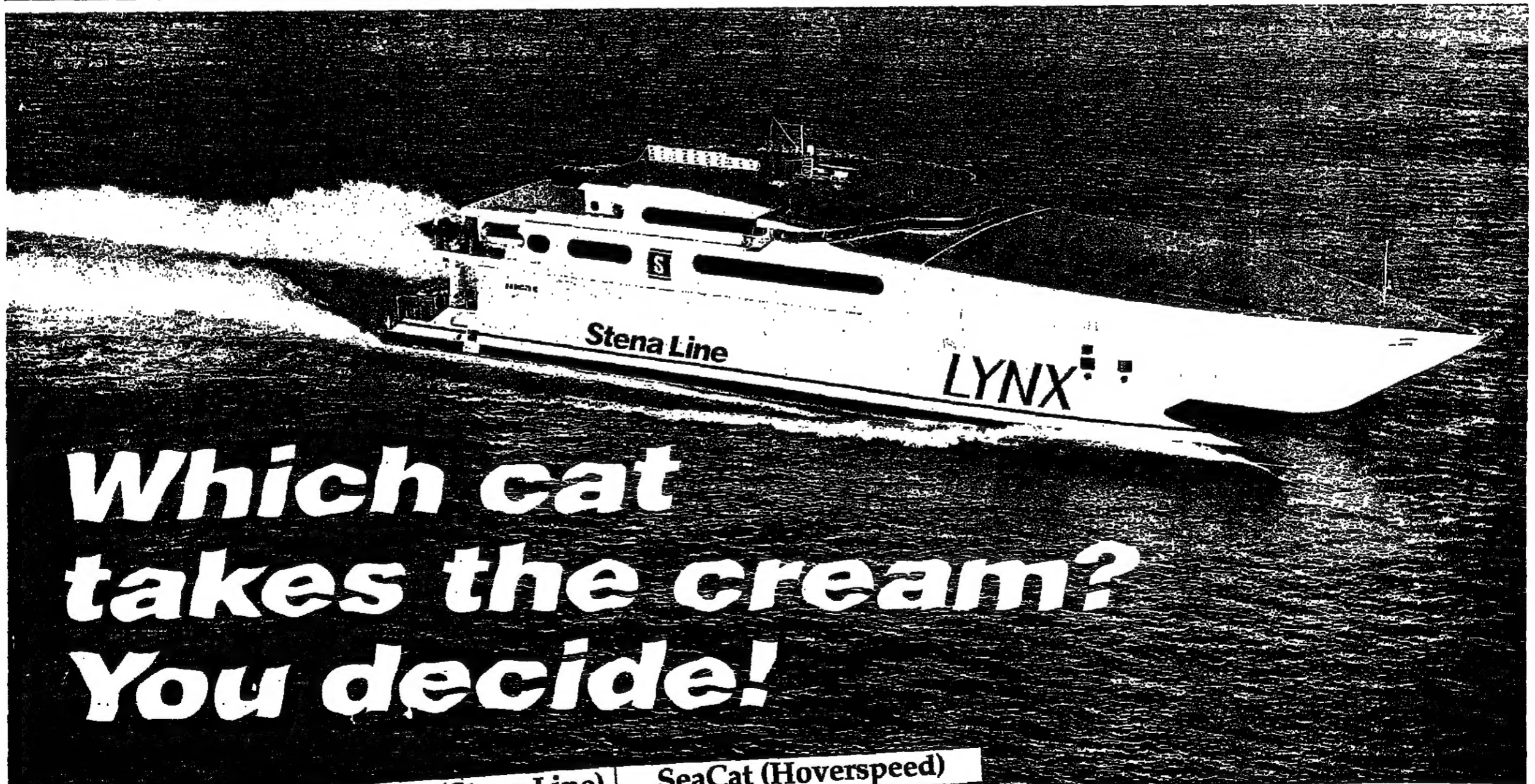
Michel Friedmann, a leading German Jew and lawyer

'I feel bitter. I am convinced that I only did my duty and applied the law'

Agostino Quistelli, presiding judge at the Italian court

'We thought this was a chance to distinguish military values on the one hand and criminal SS thuggery on the other'

Shimon Samuels, international affairs director of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre



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OLYMPIC GAMES

Slocombe fires angry parting shot

Hockey David Hopps

SUE SLOCOMBE ended a 25-year association with international hockey yesterday by joining the growing chorus of criticism about the failings of British sport.

Slocombe, a lecturer at West of England University in Bristol, took a year's leave and stood down as coach of Sutton Coldfield to guide Britain through the Olympics.



Sorry hockey sticks... Kath Johnson, left, is consoled by Sue Fraser as the Netherlands celebrate bronze

Cuba hopes for a magnificent seven in the ring this evening

Savon all set to get back in gold routine

Boxing Richard Williams

HE HAD his gunshield in his hand, taped and gloved. But Felix Savon, the most feared boxer in the Olympic Games, had no one to fight.

His opponent, a Russian named Luan Krasniqi, had failed to appear at the weigh-in for their heavy-weight semi-final, yet the rules of the competition dictated that Savon could not accept the walkover.

Boardman's pursuit at the mercy of the weather

Cycling William Fotheringham

CHRIS BOARDMAN, winner of the Olympic track pursuit title in 1992, is high on the list of favourites for today's inaugural individual time-trial title, but the unpredictable Atlanta

weather could well turn the event into a lottery. After his first finish in the Tour de France, Boardman has been pleased with his form in training here around Stone Mountain Park.

event that could be rendered meaningless by the weather. The problem stems from the decision to run the 33.4-mile race over four laps of the road-race circuit, where on Wednesday Max Sciandri gave Britain its first medal in the discipline for 40 years.

As a result, riders will start at 50-second intervals in four batches of 10, with an hour between each batch. But the weather conditions can change so quickly that some

may ride in relative cool, others in midday heat. Some may have dry roads, others tarmac inches deep in water. On city roads soaked in oil and diesel, rain could be decisive.

On city roads soaked in oil and diesel, rain could be decisive. Last year's prologue Tour time-trial was held half in daylight on dry roads and half in near dark during a thunderstorm. The winner was a relative unknown, and Boardman, riding to the limit, fell and broke his ankle. All will be praying for clear skies today.

Another US hope went down in the preceding bout, but this time the result was hardly unexpected. Roshil Wells, a 25-year-old Atlanta amateur, was defeated by a little beyond enthusiasm and hometown support to commend him against Ariel Hernandez, the Cuban who is said to be, pound-for-pound, the world's best amateur boxer.

The best of the rest

Gymnastics Kerri Strug, whose vault when injured put her face on almost every television screen across the United States, has signed with a sports agent. Marketing experts said Strug, whose courage helped the US women's team win their first Olympic gold, could earn up to \$5 million (\$3.3 million) from commercial endorsements.

Yesterday in Atlanta

Athletics Men's 4x100m relay Qualifiers for semi-finals: Great Britain 38.47, USA 38.57, Canada 38.82, Germany 38.77, Slovenia 39.02, France 39.22, Sweden 39.02, Bahamas 39.28, Jamaica 39.21, Spain 39.22, Ivory Coast 39.24, Korea 39.25, France 39.02, Cuba 39.14.

Men's 500m kayak singles Qualifiers for semi-finals: Great Britain 4:14.92, Canada 4:14.92, France 4:14.92, Slovenia 4:14.92, Germany 4:14.92, Spain 4:14.92, USA 4:14.92, Jamaica 4:14.92, Italy 4:14.92, Japan 4:14.92, Korea 4:14.92, France 4:14.92, Cuba 4:14.92.

Men's 100m platform Qualifiers for semi-finals: Great Britain 45.12, Canada 45.12, France 45.12, Slovenia 45.12, Germany 45.12, Spain 45.12, USA 45.12, Jamaica 45.12, Italy 45.12, Japan 45.12, Korea 45.12, France 45.12, Cuba 45.12.

Rhythmic Gymnastics All-around individual Qualifiers for semi-finals: 1. E. Vozniakova (UKR) 39.200, 2. E. Vozniakova (UKR) 39.200, 3. E. Vozniakova (UKR) 39.200, 4. E. Vozniakova (UKR) 39.200, 5. E. Vozniakova (UKR) 39.200.

Soccer Paul Fitzpatrick THE protracted transfer of Martin Offiah from Wigan to the London Broncos finally went through yesterday, and the prolific winger is expected to make his debut against Warrington at The Valley tomorrow.

Soccer Murdoch allows Offiah his double shift

when Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, backers of Super League and with whom Offiah has signed a "loyalty deal", became concerned about the scope of Bedford's involvement. Matthew Elliott, 31, will step up to become head coach of the Bradford Bulls when Brian Smith returns to Australia to coach Parramatta at the end of the season.

afterwards because of a knee injury. He then assisted Smith at Kogarah Oval. Wigan's disaffected Shaun Edwards is being linked with Keighley's coaching vacancy, but the Cougars were offered no encouragement yesterday by Jack Robinson, the Lancashire club's chairman.

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OLYMPIC GAMES: Britain's athletes struggle into the final weekend, page 10
BOXING: Savon all set to get back in gold routine, page 11

SportsGuardian

Search for British success is like Sneedling in a haystack



Jim White

IT HAS been the "and he's still in there, battling away in seventh place just trailing the Lithuanian" Olympics: the BBC has devoted 300 hours broadcasting to flop and failure to qualify; Des Lynam reduced to sug-

gesting we can all take pride in the fact the Italian gold medalist has a great-uncle who runs a sandwich bar in Scarborough. Now it is about to finish, for the next couple of weeks the air-waves and newspapers will be filled with inquests as to why we are so crap at the Olympics. John Major will blame left-wing councils, Tony Blair will blame parsimonious central government and the rest of the nation will order a take-away pizza, crack open a six-pack and flick to another channel on the remote control. On television on Thursday night, David Moorcroft suggested that the Olympic post-

modern season should be extended, so that real issues could be addressed and that something positive might emerge from Atlanta (apart from a drug test that strips our top weight-lifter of a hard earned 12th place in the clean and jerk). Moorcroft, sadly, was being disingenuous. He knows full well more time cannot be devoted to the Olympic-inquiry season without it clashing badly with the why-can't-we-beat-anyone-at-cricket-self-flagellation season which itself merges seamlessly into the why-can't-any-of-our-foot-ball-clubs-win-in-Europe-any-more inquest season. As the analysis has to be delivered quickly, therefore,

let's hope someone points out the fundamental reason why Britain will never achieve dominance in the Olympics: they include a load of sports we don't play. Baseball, basketball, handball, that's three golds beyond us before you even mention softball, beach volleyball and that bizarre performance featuring half a dozen anorexic 14-year-olds bouncing around a sprung mattress while waving coloured streamers above their heads. The only sport we in Britain can glean from such events is listening to our commentators, generally schooled in the hurly of the Premiership, struggling with the intricacies of some sport

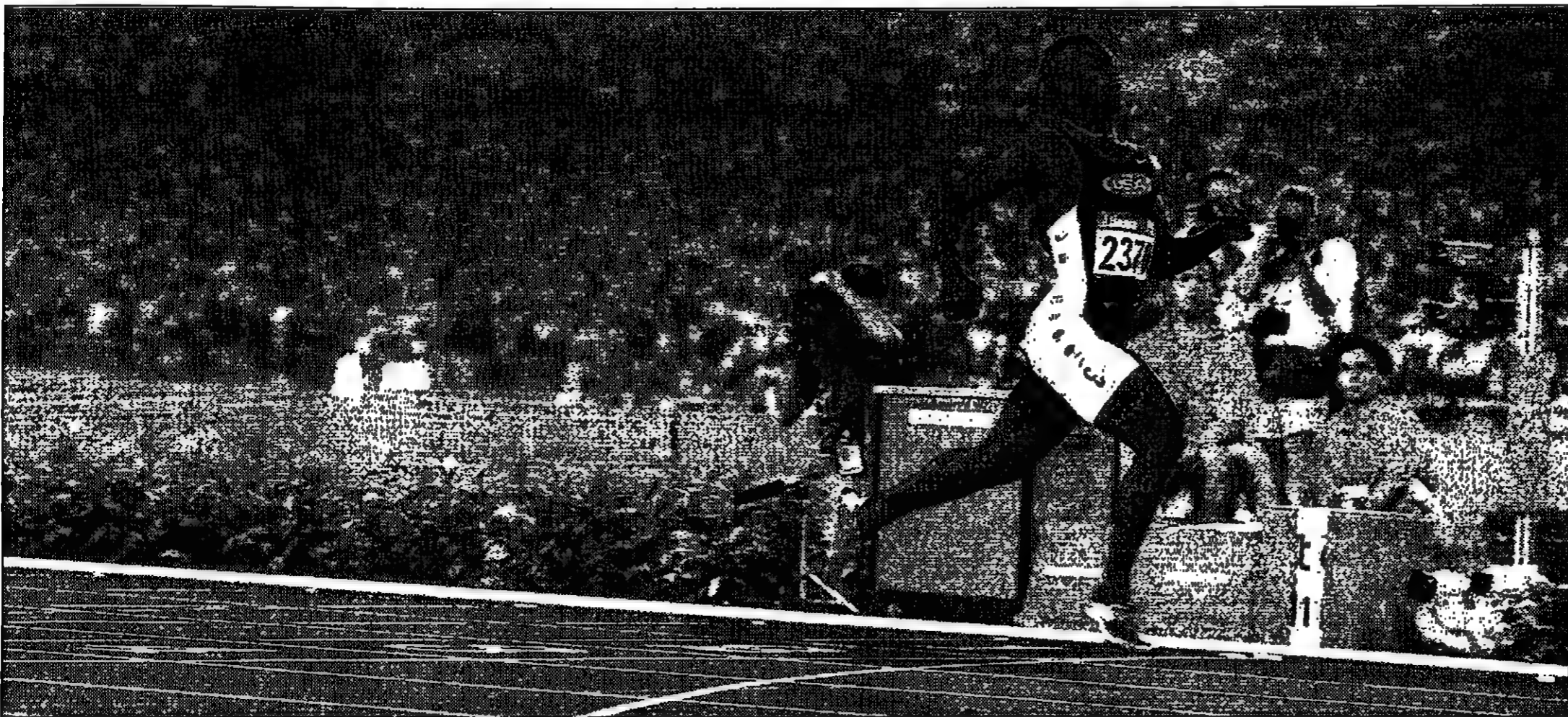
they never even knew existed before they drew the short straw in the media village. Gerald Sinstadt, for instance, gave a gold-medal performance at the kayak qualifiers on Thursday when he confidently told us that "the Pole's stroke index is now reaching 35". Worse, not only are we excluded from half the competition, but many of the events in which we excel play no part in the Olympic fortnight. Since the Americans seem able to introduce every insular, pointless sport they play in order to make their medal tally look ever more muscular, why don't our representatives on the IOC do something useful for British morale and

lobby for inclusion of some of our own. That doesn't mean cricket and rugby, no point giving the Australians yet more to gloat about. But imagine how different the national mood would be after a Stephen Hendry, John Parrot, Ronnie O'Sullivan medal sweep in the snooker singles. Or what a magnificent, uplifting sight it would be to see Nick Faldo, the Carl Lewis of golf, putting his way to a fourth successive gold, as Greg Norman crumples to silver in his wash. We would be laughing in the way up the medal table in the crown-green bowls and would be able to show those unfairly

over-resourced Latvians who's boss in the sheepdog trials. Not to mention the Eton Wall Game. Or if that's too elitist, what about Sneedling the Boggin, or whatever that game involving the entire male population of two Lincolnshire villages, several hectares of liquid mud and a flaming beer barrel and played on the third Wednesday after Shrove Tuesday is called. The trouble is, you get the feeling that were the British Olympic Committee able to side-step the American television networks and soft-drink manufacturers who now run the IOC and manage to have Sneedling instituted in time for Sydney 2000, it

might not make that much difference to our position in the final medal table. The moment the news of its inclusion was leaked, you know full well that the French would have a municipal mud bath installed in every town, the Germans would have a national programme of excellence in place and Nike would announce a massive deal with the American Sneedling Association ("Just wallow in it"). And the British team — the whole of Lymp-ton-Under-Satellite paying their own way to Australia through a series of sponsored bed-pushes — would be eliminated in the qualifying rounds of yet another sport we gave the world.

OUT ON HIS OWN . . . THE SPRINT WONDER LEAVES HIS 200M RIVALS AND THE WORLD GASPING

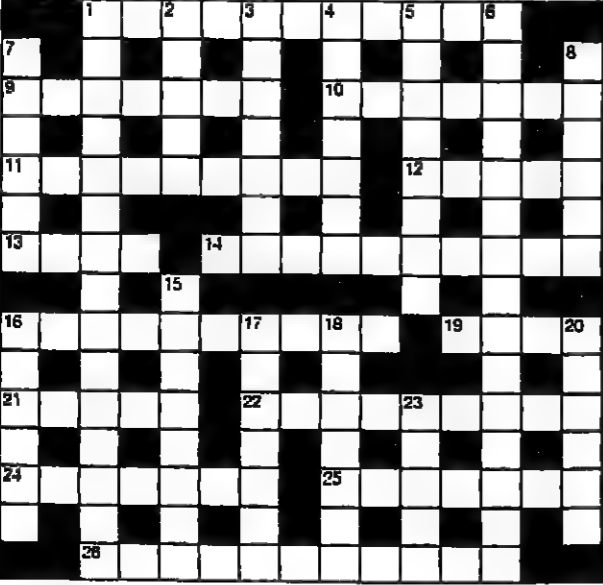


'I thought the man who wins the 100 is the fastest man alive. Not any more'

Frank Keating witnesses a Texan's unforgettable lone star triumph

Atlanta belongs to Michael Johnson

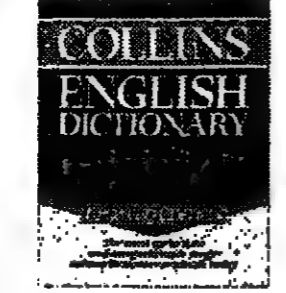
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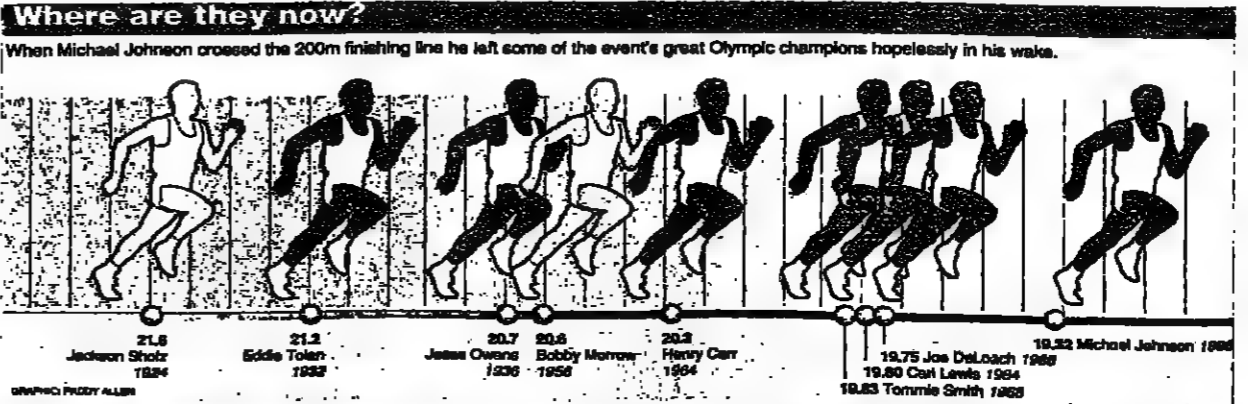
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23. POP ARTIST
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25. HE BROUGHT COLOUR
26. CUSTOMER

A YEAR before I was born there was Jesse-Owens-at-Berlin. For obvious and retold reasons that hypenated resonance of man and place will be twinned and twinned in the log for ever. In my lifetime, Blankers-Koen and London go together, and so do Zatopek and Helsinki in 1952. Spitz equals Munich, and Daley-Coe-Overt certainly go with Moscow like a horse and carriage. There was LA and Carl Lewis, and Ben Johnson, notoriously, at Seoul. Another Johnson is garlanded with sport's laurel wreath in 1996. Ever remembered. The upright, sober-sided Texan has taken Georgia by storm. Victor Ludorum, and a phenomenal one at that. A man's gotta do... and he did just that. And that is the word. It is not the over-used, "phenomenal". In Italia, and underlined to boot. Consider first, that Johnson laid to waste in his laid-back manner in this 200 metres such fancied dandies as Frankie Fredericks and Ato Boldon in shattering his own world record with an astounding 19.32sec. And that, had Johnson entered the 100m, he would more than likely on Saturday have slapped the world record winner Donovan Bailey into second place. The first man to win gold medals in both the 200m and 400m at the same Games was to attempt to add another in the 4x400m relay but yesterday withdrew with a hamstring injury. He had won 54 races on the trot in the 400m and had never lost an outdoor final at that distance. Before a minor glitch last month he had reeled off 21 consecutive victories in the 200m and has been ranked No.1 in the world at both events for four years, unprecedented. He was world champion in each event singly — the 200m at Tokyo five years ago and the 400m at Stuttgart in 1993 — and won them both in Sweden last year. There was a nice tribute from Derek Mills, the world's third-ranked 400m runner: "I keep trying to remember that Michael is just a man." A friend, arriving back from the stadium on Thursday, genuinely elated, said much the same. "I'm going to frame that night and that performance. I'm going to bang it on a wall at home, or better still try and sell it to an art gallery or museum." Johnson afterwards actually bothered to smile. "The world record is a bonus," he said. "The most important thing to me was making history. A lot of people hold a world record, and I did too before I arrived here. But nobody else can say they made history, the first man to win the 200 and 400. I told myself before I got in the blocks that this was the one I wanted. I didn't make it in Barcelona because of food poisoning and I have been four years since just looking for this one. "I stumbled — did you notice? — around my fourth step from the blocks, but then I got into gear pretty fast. By a dozen strides or so I was just relaxed. I sat back in the armchair. I was feeling good and honestly felt I couldn't go any faster than I was already going. After about 80-90 metres, I felt totally in control and at that point I just went to my endurance and gave it all I had. I knew the time was faster than 19.66 but I didn't know how fast. To run 19.33 is unbelievable. "If you want an analogy of the incredible thrill I felt, well, go out and get a go-kart, find a hill, a very steep one, and let it go, and you'll know how it feels. Pretty good, eh? "After winning the 400 I was under a lot of pressure to do the double but this is how I perform when I am under that kind of pressure." Boldon won his second bronze medal of the Games. He shook his head in genuine awe. "I had always thought the man who wins the hundred is the fastest man alive. Not any more. Michael is the fastest human now with all respect to my friend Bailey. Phenomenon is the only word for it." Quite so. Before the race Jesse Owens's wife Ruth sent a fax to Johnson simply saying "Michael — deliver." He did. With knobs on. Just like Jesse Owens had that day when Adolf Hitler petulantly walked out on him in Berlin a lifetime ago in 1936.



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The women who you need now
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The women who wrecked a Hawk jet left a propaganda video in the cockpit. All you need now to start a revolution is a camera and laptop, says **MICHAEL WHITE**

Now we're watching Big Brother

GORGE ORWELL was famously right about the Soviet Union. But he was hopelessly wrong about describing the malign technologies which Big Brother would deploy to keep Winston Smith and the rest of us under constant surveillance in 1984 and beyond?

You do not have to be a wild optimist to shout "Yes, magnificently wrong!" as various disconnected events around the world have again shown this week. The events were typical of the battle between them and us, the politico-commercial powers that be and the citizenry.

The chief battleground is the Internet. But the four women peace campaigners who were acquitted in Liverpool Crown Court of inflicting £1.5 million worth of criminal damage — they had taken hammers to a British Aerospace Hawk "trainer" jet being sold to Indonesia — used a much more limited tool. They won their case. In part, because of the 15-minute videotape they left in the cockpit explaining the motives behind their action. The tape was played to the jury, which went on to acquit them.

For Orwell, dying of TB at a time when the world's few computers filled whole rooms with valves and coat hangers, the idea that sophisticated video cameras might — within what could easily have been his own lifetime — be cheaply available to leftwing idealists would have been inconceivable. Far from being used as a weapon for the propagation of dictatorships, as Orwell feared, the reality is now often the opposite: Big Brother, We're Watching YOU!

A video camera, hand-held by an onlooker, enabled Rodney King to prove that he had been brutally beaten by LA policemen. Without the video, a black ex-con's word stood no chance against theirs. Television professionals call such technology "amateur video" when they broadcast it on news programmes. But it is better than no technology at all. It was an amateur (of sorts) who caught Bill Clinton's Falls Road handshake with Gerry Adams; the White House didn't mean him to, but Sinn Féin did.

Video is just one aspect. As long ago as 1978, the Iranian revolution was helped by amateur tape-recordings. Today, oppressive regimes the world over are faced with a range of subversive new technologies, as the military junta in Indonesia must be all too aware. In addition to that damaged Hawk jet, it was reported this week that middle-class Indonesian dissidents were keeping in touch by mobile phone. Their conversations were doubtless filled with gra-

ph and rumour mixed with fact, but that was one step forward from gossip and rumour in isolation.

But surely mobile phone calls can easily be intercepted, as every ex-royal princess knows? True, and they can be used to trace the whereabouts of the caller, much as telephone calls can be monitored and traced. What defeats the buggers, in every sense of the word, is the big and ever-increasing scale of modern communications.

Even with special software, designed to pick up key words like "Semtex" or "Mandelson", you can't bug them all. That is one of the many things which changed the nature of the Soviet Union without a shot being fired. If you run a society which requires a policeman to be stationed at every Xerox machine — in Romania typewriters had to be licensed — you can't run a modern society. The demand for information is too great.

Which broke down the Iron Curtain, the Berlin Wall, the Kremlin Wall even?

Rupert Murdoch, among others, modestly claimed to have played his part in carrying the torch of television liberty east of the Elbe. Yet the same Murdoch sold the troublesome South China Morning Post in Hong Kong and took BBC TV News off his Star satellite system in Asia, rather than offend Beijing. He did the same in New Delhi and Kuala Lumpur.

That is cause for gloom, but not for despair. For when all else fails — and as yet it hasn't — there is always the Internet, the development of which runs at such a pace that all but the most committed of anarchists fail to keep up.

Most politicians, (and political correspondents), are especially Luddites, even when they are urging others to get wired. But they cannot escape the consequences of the world they have helped to create.

Thus, the other day, Michael Portillo found that a camera trained on his front door was hooked up to the Internet so that surfers around the world could see who was entering or leaving. As it happens, this was a stunt to publicise the Daily Planet, an Anglo-Dutch "news and entertainment" Web site.

The defence secretary's home had been chosen because he had just announced the £1.6 billion sale of other MoD married quarters. Yet when BT pulled the plug on the exercise, Nick Rosen, the Net guru behind the stunt, switched it to a computer in Montreal within minutes — just to make the point that this stuff is virtually beyond regulation.

Similar exercises are less flippant, as even a cursory trawl through the electronic cuttings will show. The owner of a French cybercafé put on to the Internet an unauthorized biography of François Mitterrand which had been banned by the French authorities. Since France has musical privacy laws, he was raided because he had made no attempt to render his political gesture anonymous — but not before thousands of people had downloaded the book.

Imagine how differently the spycatchers might have been played out if such technology had existed in the mid-1980s. As things were, would-be readers had to fly to New York — in real time — to buy the Viking edition of the book and evade the British ban.

In 1996, the sick-madaked subcommandante Marcos made his Zapatista revolt against the Mexican government a global event by tapping out his communiqués on a laptop. Copying them on to floppy disc, he put them into computer bulletin boards via old-fashioned courier. It is a technique increasingly familiar to

peace and environmental groups — anti-road GreenNet subscribers, for instance — to coordinate action.

The epic McLibel case has acquired a global audience the same way. Beseiged Sarajevo may have got its trains back only this week, but it stayed connected via the Net to the global village through the Serbian blockade, a reproach to ethnic cleansing and xenophobic radio, TV and press.

There is a downside to all this. The Adams bomber and the far-right militias which the US has spawned — encouraged, it must be said, by old-style talk radio, just like the 1980s — have access, too, and may download bomb technology information with as much ease as other Net-surfers find pornography.

Bill Clinton recently wondered aloud if Tokyo's Aum cult will spread its sarin gas

techniques in the same way. It is a miserable fact, documented by such bodies as PC-Meter Sweep, which monitors Web sites in the same way as ratings firms monitor TV, that home PC users flock to so-called "adult sites", such as Playboy and Hotsex, far more than they access the vast array of serious material. For \$5 a minute, using a video-conferencing PC, you (if you want to be male, single and 30-ish) can interact with a naked model on the Web. There's money in that. Even in China, where PC users — a million by the year 2000 — must register with the government and promise not to break the law, the main sin is porn, not post-1989men Square politics.

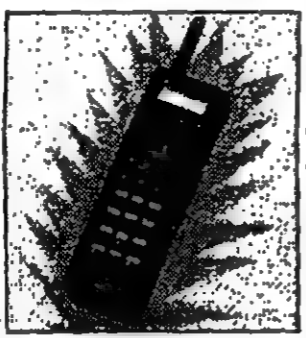
In the US, it is in this area that the doctrines of free speech and commerce clash most obviously with mainstream public taste and with

government instincts to regulate. So far, the markets and the libertarians are winning and, unavoidably, the pornographers and the paedophiles.

There are problems with legitimate intellectual copyright and with illegal hacking and encryption software, all of which have national security as well as privacy implications. In most criminal cases, Rosen says, the cooperation needed between governments, police and Internet service providers to trace terrorists, money-launderers and child-molesters is forthcoming. But they face a huge task. There was an outfit in Finland, for instance, which was willing to pass on anonymous e-mail for anyone — including sex maniacs. Finnish police eventually raided it. The group had provided the service on the basis of their libertarian principles, only to show that what most



ILLUSTRATION: NANA ALLEN



You can pick up satellite TV in Beijing with a wok. There are a billion woks in China

Camcorders, mobile phones, Xeroxes... the list grows. Faxes, a relatively old technology which has belatedly come of age, enables people to communicate by letter more quickly than they could have in the late Victorian era, when there were three or more postal deliveries a day.

Satellite TV, cable TV... the list continues. In Hong Kong, one of those irrepressibly optimistic Shanghai-and-Harvard businessmen you must (this one had torn up his US passport to prove his faith in the post-1997 future) told me that he was certain that intellectual freedom would soon prevail in China.

Why? "Because I could pick up satellite television in Beijing using a wok," he said. "There are one billion woks in China." He was rich and clever, it is hard to reason to doubt him. Had not poorly-received television signals been part of the invasion force

A SOUVENIR



The MALT



The MACALLAN

TAKES ITS PLACE AT THE TOP OF THE WINNER'S PODIUM, THE RESULT OF MANY A TASTE TEST SUCCESS, SO IF YOU'RE IN SEARCH OF A PERSONAL BEST LOOK NO FURTHER THAN The MALT

Greed out of control

SADLY WE HAVE become far too accustomed to watching the gray train of privatisation gathering speed, but what is now happening to the railways almost beggars belief. In January, Porterbrook — one of the three leasing companies which purchased British Rail's 11,000-strong fleet of trains — paid £527 million for its share (3,774 trains) after an international, but hardly high-profile, auction had taken place. Porterbrook almost certainly got these assets on the cheap because the whole thing was conducted in great haste for political reasons and also because Porterbrook was sold to a company in which the existing management and employees had 20 per cent of the shares. In itself, that's fine. We are all in favour of encouraging employees to take a long-term stake in their companies, aren't we?

Um, er... This week, seven months later, our sturdy stakeholders have agreed to sell their company for £825 million, making a nice little capital gain of almost £300 million. This represents a 500 per cent gain of £80 million for the lucky punters of Porterbrook, including

a £39.9 million bonus for its managing director, Sandy Anderson (a former BR terminal manager) and multi-millionaire status for two of his fellow directors. Forgive us if we sound old-fashioned, but wouldn't that unearned £300 million gain — more than BR usually makes in a year — have been better employed on something more useful: like badly-needed investment in the railways? It is not as if the new owners have performed some management magic on their trains. There has been no new investment and 80 per cent of the revenues on which they have made such a disgraceful profit are actually guaranteed by the taxpayer.

And who are they selling out to? Why, to Stagecoach, which already has 17 per cent of the national bus market and is hungry for expansion! Stagecoach already operates one of the big rail franchises (ie operating a service as opposed to leasing the trains) out of Waterloo, and has put in a bid for all of the remaining 12 unallocated franchises. Privatisation was supposed to be all about breaking the railways up into smaller, competing units — but now Stagecoach is trying to put Humpty Dumpty together again.

A key question is why the Porterbrook franchise is suddenly worth £300 million more than it was seven months ago. Either the expensively paid City bankers got their valuation wrong (in which case has the taxpayer any redress?) or the assets are worth more to Stagecoach — because it is a brilliant spotter of opportunities or it is in a position to exploit a growing monopolistic position. It is true that the leasing companies have suddenly realised they can

convert their debts into cheaper financial instruments by securing them against future revenue streams (guaranteed by the taxpayer, remember) but surely we didn't privatise in order to get the benefits of nationalisation? Also, Stagecoach told the Financial Times it could reduce Porterbrook's spending on maintenance by up to 30 per cent. That should go down well with passengers.

What should be done now? Stagecoach's bid for Porterbrook should be referred immediately to the Monopolies Commission to examine the major competition issues it raises. If it isn't referred, it will be taken as a signal that it is open house for anyone who wants to re-create a cosy monopoly within the scattered remains of the former British Rail. That is the easy bit, because the dock should really be occupied by the Government, which rushed an unprecedentedly complicated privatisation through for totally political motives. There was no reason to privatise BR in the first place, because most of the improvements to efficiency could have been achieved through the regulatory regime. But once privatisation had been decided on, BR should have been sold off in dollops, as most of the others were. This would have maximised the return to the taxpayer, while ensuring that if there were problems of undervaluation in some areas they wouldn't be repeated in others.

Instead, the Government chose the worst possible conditions in which to maximise the price — an enforced sale of all the assets at once against an accelerated political agenda. We will be living with the consequences for years to come.

Financing the flicks

WHY ISN'T the British film industry a success? This may seem a strange question when over the past 20 years almost one in three Oscars has gone to British artists, but the films — even if the actors, director and crew are British — are American. Go to any cinema and check; nine out of 10 films in British cinemas come from Hollywood. This is not the inevitable result of the US dominating world popular culture. Lack of finance, not lack of talent, prevents British cinema from becoming a world leader. Government investment is needed to start the ball rolling.

This is made clear by the National Heritage advisory committee report on the British film industry. Virginia Bottomley went so far as to call this a "thoughtful contribution". That's very nice, but firm commitment is required. First, the Treasury should agree to encourage domestic film production through tax breaks, as the report recommends. British film-makers should be able to write off production costs in the year they are incurred against tax. Tax relief played a vital role in the growth of the US film industry and could do the same for Britain. More difficult is the need identified for structural change to create companies big enough to produce and distribute British films. Too often film rights are sold in advance to fund production — take *Four Weddings and A Funeral* or *Sense and Sensibility* —

and the box office returns go to the big American players, rather than back to the makers. The big profits that could fund the next project are lost for the want of cash up front. The report proposes the creation of three distribution studios, big enough to combine production and distribution as the Hollywood companies do, and able to build up a slate of films to spread the risk. The idea is a good one, the problem is it would take money. At present the Government puts just £23 million into the industry to support film schools, and there is no direct support for actual production. The Arts Council has no earmarked sum to create big distribution studios. The lottery money allocation is just £70 million for production, and £40 million for distribution, over the next five years. This is a pittance. ITV is planning to spend over £100 million in the same period to challenge Channel 4 and the BBC in film-making.

Government finance is required to build the foundations and encourage private investment — the process economists call "crowding in". A practical approach would be the provision of repayable loans with subsidised interest rates, to allow British film-makers to produce and distribute, rather than handing the project over to Hollywood. It is nonsense for the Government to suggest the film industry must live or die by market forces alone. If the Welsh Development Agency can put up a total of £200 million to encourage valuable Korean investment in Wales, there is no reason why some sensible pump-priming should not be used to make the British film industry a world leader.

MARTIN WOOLLACOTT argues that the outrages of Atlanta and TWA 800 have shattered the peculiarly American fantasy that they face a unified clandestine force.

Exploding the myth of terrorism

THE reaction to the bombings that have terrified and angered Americans in recent weeks may, paradoxically, mark the end of the "Age of Terrorism" as we have experienced it over the last quarter of a century.

Not the end of bombing or other clandestine violence directed against western governments — both, unhappily, are likely to continue. But the end of the idea that terrorism is a single phenomenon, and that it is best opposed by an organised international response aimed at centres of terror, is in sight.

This is an idea that has become, if it was not always, an obstacle to clear thinking about modern violence. Events since the TWA 800 disaster and the Atlanta bomb demonstrate that while the idea of terrorism is still a great generator of rhetoric, it is no longer a basis for effective action even domestically and has lost most of its capacity to mobilise the international community.

The congressional task force created to draft new measures against terrorism is already in some disarray over their necessity, while the Americans did not even try at the Paris summit earlier this week to secure European agreement for their objective of isolating five "terrorist" states. Indeed the United States and the European Union, rather than preparing common sanctions against Cuba, Libya, or Iraq, are in fact preparing sanctions against each other after American legislation proposed penalties in US courts, under cer-



Illustration by PETER TILL

tain circumstances, for non-American companies trading with those countries. The evident friction is an example of what happens when the attempt is made to translate a psychologically satisfying but unsound political concept into action and policy.

President Clinton has said that terrorism "may be the most significant security challenge of the 21st century". He has told Americans, "We can't let terror win. That is not the American way." Louis Freeh, the director of the FBI, said in evidence to Congress that the US faced "an increasing war" against "its interests both here and in the world". Ladies and gentlemen, in the right hand corner, the United States of America, in the left hand corner, Terrorism.

It is possible that Americans will for a while continue to enter into this sloppy dramatisation, but Europeans will no longer do so. That is not because Europeans know nothing about bombs — they have had far more of them than America has. Nor is it because European countries foolishly put their commercial interests before international security, although they undoubtedly have sometimes done so. It is because they now reject the American fantasy that there is a single force called terrorism supported and largely sustained by certain states which can be dealt with by economic and sometimes military action against those states.

In his study of the militarisation of the US, In the Shadow Of War, the historian Martin Sherry argues that, when real war receded as a

possibility, Americans, "a people so accustomed to war of some sort that its cessation seemed almost unimaginable", looked around for substitutes. They found them in crime, in drugs, and especially in terrorism. Ronald Reagan, strongly supported by Margaret Thatcher, fought a war against terrorism which he compared at one point with the struggle against the Nazis. The connections between different clandestine movements were emphasised even when they were quite minor, and the connection with the Soviet Union in particular were exaggerated to the point where terrorism became a "terror network" directed by the USSR and its allies.

America's tendency to lump

nerability to political violence emanating from other societies". There was a sense of alarm and outrage and a tendency to both exaggerate the impact of terrorism and to see a unity in terrorist action that never existed.

None of this means that violent movements should not have been, or should not now be, opposed by force when necessary. But in practice, the best ways of dealing with them have proved to be specific rather than general, flexible rather than draconian, and national rather than international. The work of co-ordinating international and domestic law has been largely completed, as, with few loopholes still to be closed, has been that of co-ordinating security measures in international transport. But, as Guelke points out, terrorism does not usually end because it is directly defeated, whether by international or national measures. It ends because circumstances change, because offers are made, or because the terrorists themselves decide that their objectives are not attainable. Anti-terrorism is in a sense more

In the right hand corner, the United States of America, in the left hand corner, Terrorism

real than terrorism. The bombs and the guns are, of course, all too real but they have been or are in the hands of very different groups with very different aspirations. Anti-terrorism on the other hand is a single ideology. Popular outrage and the political needs of western governments have coincided. The latter seized on a concept that would cover all challenges to the international and domestic orders they had created.

Individual governments also found the concept of a general terrorist enemy very useful in depriving their own specific enemies of sympathy or support they might otherwise have enjoyed in other western countries. These trade-offs continue today, when Russia, for instance, legitimises its war in Chechnya by smuggling it into the anti-terrorist consensus at international meetings. The US, facing some violent opponents in the Middle East and, perhaps, its fellow neo-conservative extremists, is tempted to revive the anti-terrorism of the past, but is unlikely to be able to do so. Terror will go on, but terrorism, as a unifying and mobilising idea, has had its day.

Time out for strikers



Jeremy Hardy

AS Labour's discomfort over the actions of postal workers and tube drivers intensifies, I feel bound to ask what ever happened to the right to strike? I don't mean the right to strike effectively, which was abolished in the night, I mean the right to strike at all. I grew up in a society which assumed that workers had a moral, legal and political right to withdraw their labour in furtherance of their legitimate aspirations — they could go on strike when they liked. They could strike officially and if their leaders tried to cook up a cosy deal behind their backs, they could strike unofficially.

I have affectionate remembrances of the strike-torn seventies. In those days there were no OHSed inspections to dig sweaty, muscle men with to rely on strikes. For a while, we could hardly get to school. Train drivers or bus drivers would be out, or diesel supplies cut off. There were power cuts during lessons. Halfway through assembly, the miners would bring the government down, an election would be called, the school would become a polling station and we'd all be sent home.

Nowadays, there are only one-day strikes — the class struggle fought on flexitime. And yet even the timid industrial actions of the minorities cause squirming embarrassment for Labour leaders. A picket line is as passé as a mobile set. Union leaders are big, sweaty, muscle men with string vests visible through nylon shirts, men who look and speak like John Prescott but are still working class.

One of the interesting contrasts between Lord Tebbit and Clare Short is that he once led a strike of BOAC pilots while she runs out of TV studios if the word is used. Striking was not only once respectable, the right to strike was seen as a democratic freedom fought for over centuries. Everyone should be able to belong to a union and there was not much point in unions if they didn't have the ultimate sanction of striking.

Of course, industrial dis-

ruptures were not the establishment's favourite diversion. Both parties wanted to bring the unions to heel. Barbara Castle, now remembered as a standard bearer of the Left, proposed to limit union power with In Place Of Strife. Heath, who now inspires affection for hating Lady Thatcher even more than the rest of us do, tried to clobber the unions with the Industrial Relations Act. They destroyed him. Indeed, they put the last Labour government into power, something that is never remembered when the fact that they put it out again is being aired.

It is also sometimes forgotten that the unions founded the Labour Party to reverse anti-strike legislation. The idea of a Labour Party with no link to the Labour movement is absurd. Labour without the unions is as pointless as the unions without the right to strike.

But the watchword of New Labour is respectability, and striking is just not respectable. It involves confrontation. It demonstrates with uncomfortable clarity that the interests of employer and employee are not the same. It politicises people. It gives them confidence and power over their lives. It shows them that business and government are not all powerful. It encourages them not to just vote Labour, sit back and think that everything will be all right.

A RECENT Home Office decision which received little coverage relates to the case of John Matthews of Derry. Readers may remember that three years ago a magistrate threw out terrorism charges against Matthews and said that he left the court without a stain on his character. There appeared to be no case against him and he had gathered an impressive group of supporters which included Peter Bottomley and the RUC.

Yet as he left court he was served with an exclusion order banning him from Britain, exclusion orders being the only area of the law which acknowledges Northern Ireland as being of a different country. According to the Home Secretary, British Intelligence regarded him as a terrorist but couldn't say why because it was a secret.

So Matthews was sent back to Derry labelled a terrorist and therefore jumped straight to the head of the line of death-lists. He fortunately survived, and the exclusion order has now been lifted. The Home Office can't say why because it's a secret.

Smallweed



ONE sun, said G K Chesterton, is sublime: two suns would be merely vulgar. I used to think the same about my favourite building, Leeds Town Hall. But now it ap-

pears there are two Leeds suns: one in Leeds, and one in Australia. The city has been approached by the parliament of the state of Victoria to furnish it with the plans of Cuthbert Broderick's Yorkshire maquette in order that their building can be completed as part of a £40 million refurbishment programme. At present it lacks the crowning glory of Leeds's tower and dome. In all other respects, said the message from Melbourne, the buildings were almost identical. Peter Kerr, a Scottish émigré architect, won the competition in Melbourne, it's alleged, by submitting the plans of Leeds town hall as all his own work. He also claimed to have designed the Houses of Parliament.

I owe these revelations to the Yorkshire Post. Out of gratitude, I have decided not to mention that this

newspaper last Saturday carried a picture on page one of "Sir Geoffrey Boycott" leaving the Botham/Lamb/Imran extravaganza. Sorry, Leeds; but the Palace has still not got round to it.

WHY, when someone sneezes, do others say: "Bless you"? According to a newly-published Dictionary of Superstitions (Casell, £9.98) it's because early Christians believed you lost part of your soul when you sneezed. The way to recapture it was for someone to bless you. Having always believed it had something to do with the plague, I found this surprising. So I turned to further enlightenment to Dr Brewer's Reader's Handbook Of Allusions, References, Plots And Stories. "A person who sneezed," this explains, "was at one time supposed

to be under the influence of fairies and demons, and as the name of God repelled all evil spirits, the benediction: God bless you drove away the demon, and counteracted its influence."

Curiously, the doctor then gives us an illustration which tells quite another story. It comes from the now neglected *Last in his Chair*, by Bickerstaff and Foote (1788).

But ruddy; I have often, Dr Skeleton, had it in my head to ask some of the faculty, what can be the reason that, when a man happens to sneeze, all the company bows.

Skeleton: Sneezing, Dr Bulruder; was a mortal symptom that attended a pestilential disease which formerly depopulated the republic of Athens; ever since, when that convulsion occurs, a short ejaculation is offered up, so that the sneezing or sternu-

ing party may not be afflicted with the same dispenser.

WHEN the Brian de Palma movie *Mission: Impossible* first hit our screens, the Observer's excellent film critic Philip French forecast that it would do for the colon what *Star Trek* ("to boldly go") had done for the ship. Witty, but wrong. Just look at ads in newspapers or lettering outside cinemas: hardly a colon in sight. Of 29 listings in yesterday's London Evening Standard, only two (the Pescocks, Woking and the UCI, Lee Valley) remembered the colon. Hardly surprising: these institutions keep bringing you something called 101 Dalmatians.

There is also a film around, I see, called *How To Make An American Quilt*. It hardly needs a whole movie

to deal with that problem. In Smallweed's experience, just two rules are necessary. 1) Arm yourself with a suitable codgel, bludgeon, knobkerrie, shillelagh or truncheon. 2) Stand over your Azrael, brandishing the above, and ordering, kindly but firmly: "Get quilting, goddamn it, or else..." You will find the fellow will very soon get the nub of your grit.

SMALLWEED expects an arrest any day now. He has been spotted in the stones at Avebury, which in June this year were daubed with what appeared to be Norse symbols. The likely culprit, the police have been told, is a 5ft 9in, brash, middle-aged bisexual vegetarian from the professional classes with a goatbeard and a twitching right eye. The information has been furnished by a coven of

witches in Hastings. Perhaps this group could now produce an identikit picture of the persons or aliens who have recently resumed the practice of peppering the Whiteacre countryside with corn circles. Smallweed's own suspicions are based on the ancient judicial principle known as *cul bono* (who benefits). It's significant, you may think, that local ne'er-do-wells have been doing a lively trade robbing the cars which come to see the crop circles.

I can also warn Atlanta police that they're wasting their time on their present investigations. According to Ambrose Evans-Pritchard of the Sunday Telegraph, it's unlikely that far-right groups in America would target an occasion like the Olympics. The fact that the caller who warned of the bomb had an

American accent proves little. "It is equally possible," E-P opines, "that the attack was carried out by a radical Middle-Eastern group, perhaps linked to terrorist mastermind Ramsi Yousef."

A Dr Bulruderly writes: There is something wrong here. You have quoted a story by Ambrose Evans-Pritchard which at no point impugns President Clinton. I put it to you that this report is a forgery, perpetrated by a) a dodgy Australian architect or b) a 5ft 9in white male bisexual sperm-throwing vegetarian from the professional classes with a goatbeard and a twitching right eye.

A SHONOURABLE members know, for animals born in 1989-90, the slaughter will be voluntary — Douglas Hoop, Commons statement on BSE.

سكاوات العرب



The ultimate deterrent... the only defence against a crew member trying to sabotage the missile firing on a Trident submarine is a wooden baton gripped by a guard. A commander says it is 'a simple and cheap answer to defend a \$900-million submarine'

Cosh! This baton is our last line of defence

Trident has cost billions, but, incredibly, amid the hi-tech hardware a man with a stick is the final guard against nuclear war. PETER TAYLOR reports

YOU can't say where it is, insisted the Ministry of Defence security officer. "But you can say it's somewhere beneath Whitehall."

I was standing in the video conference room of the Joint Operations Centre (JOC), the underground command bunker that was Mrs Thatcher's controversial post-Falklands legacy. It's protected against nuclear attack and access to it is via an array of security checks, armed guards and blast-proof steel doors. The tunnels are linked to the Cabinet Office and Number 10 and the control rooms are lined with computers operated by military personnel.

Every year, there is a dress rehearsal here for nuclear war, as the secretary of state for defence chairs a meeting of the Nuclear Briefing Committee. Around the table sit the men who will advise him: the chief of the defence staff, the chiefs of the army, navy and air force and the permanent under secretary. The defence secretary conveys the collective advice to the War Cabinet, which in turn advises the prime minister. The final decision to launch a nuclear strike is the prime minister's alone.

After 1988, the RAF's nuclear bombs will have been phased out. But that will still leave Trident II D5 missiles which would still theoretically be launched if the trigger were squeezed on board one of Britain's four Trident submarines. HMS Vanguard and HMS Victorious are now in service, and Vigilant and Vengeance will be operational by the turn of the century.

Each submarine carries up to 16 missiles with a range of more than 6,000 kilometres. Each missile can be fitted with up to 12 independently targeted nuclear warheads, each with an explosive power five times that of the bomb that flattened Hiroshima.

The firing chain that triggers the launch is the most rigorous of Whitehall procedures. The

signal goes from the prime minister to the Fleet's commander in chief at Navy Headquarters, Northwood, who has electronic communication with whichever Trident submarine is at sea. On board, the coded signal is intercepted by the weapons officer and the captain's second-in-command. At every stage, two officers double-check every detail in a process known as "duality" to minimise the risk of human error. They then take the signal from the wireless office to the control room.

Tucked away in a corner is a grey metal box that looks like a second-hand filing cabinet. Inside this nuclear safe, the combination of which the weapons officer has memorised, are the codes against which the signal from London is checked.

The only defence against any crew member trying to sabotage the firing is a wooden baton gripped by a guard. As we were filming on board HMS Victorious for an upcoming BBC series that takes a behind-the-scenes look at the MoD, I pointed out to the captain of the ship, Commander "Joey" Powis, that the defence system was scarcely high-tech. "It's a simple and cheap answer which defends a \$900-million submarine and its weapons system," he replied drily.

The wooden baton is certainly the cheapest item in the Trident budget. According to the MoD's latest figures, the total cost of the Trident programme is a staggering \$12.153 billion.

One of the few sequences it is possible to film in HMS Victorious's emergency role play was the fate of any crew member who might try to sabotage the firing. In Hollywood the object would have been shot; in the ministry's plans he would be restrained and shut up in a cupboard.

The two officers then disappear behind a black curtain and go into a huddle to check the signal from London against the codes from the safe. The captain joins them to triple-check the signal is for real. Satisfied of its authenticity, he then turns the signal into "a release

time" and "target" plan. In the missile control centre, the weapons officer, again with a memorised combination, unlocks the safe on the wall and extracts the firing mechanism — a red gun but that looks like a toy racing car control.

When all is ready, the captain inserts the key in the console before him, turns it to activate the firing system and gives the order: "You have my permission to fire." The weapons officer squeezes the trigger and the submarine echoes to a dull thud as the 60-ton missile rises out of its tube.

Commander Powis is a man of many parts. Besides potentially holding the fate of the world in his hands, he's a Mensa Mastermind finalist, an opera buff and railway fanatic who builds model engines when he's at sea and not reading Crime And Punishment or learning Japanese.

He would have no hesitation in giving the order to fire should the signal ever come for real. "I have to do it," he says. "There's no point in having nuclear weapons if you're not prepared to use them."

He means it. I asked other members of the crew what they would do if the signal ever came. One said he'd just lie under the beer keg, open his mouth and turn on the tap. Another said he'd retire to a quiet place, lie on his bunk and think of his family.

WITH only one exception, a submariner who thought the whole thing was a total waste of money, all members of the crew we spoke to had few qualms about their work. But many admitted they never really thought about the consequences because the consequences were unthinkable.

To the MoD, targeting is a highly sensitive issue. The reason of fire of Britain's Trident programme in 1990 was to provide the country with a strategic missile system that would penetrate Moscow's defences — The Moscow Criterion. No one foresaw the cold war would end.

Suddenly Trident seemed redundant, a hugely expensive insurance policy with no enemy in sight. In the new atmosphere, John Major and Boris Yeltsin agreed to "de-target" their strategic missiles so Muscovites and Londoners could sleep soundly. But this left the MoD with a problem. Having spent billions on Trident and more billions to con-

vince it to become of the system with the old enemy gone?

Justification swiftly followed. Who knows what the world will be like in 10 or 20 years' time? Russia is unstable, dangerous regimes are developing nuclear weapons, dictators may threaten our shores. Britain still needs her last line of defence. "Sub-strategic" is the new buzz phrase in the nuclear vocabulary. This means that we wouldn't unleash a down missile with multiple warheads on Moscow, but might consider a surgical "sub-strategic" strike with a single missile on, say, a nuclear or chemical facility which a Saddam or a Ghaddafi might refuse to destroy.

This raises a string of embarrassing questions. I asked Rear Admiral Roger Lane-Knox who, as Flag Officer Submarines, was responsible for the Trident fleet at the time we were filming. If he knew who the potential targets were, he said he thought he could say that he did. Was Libya one? He wasn't going to answer that. Iran? Same reply. North Korea? Same again. But he was sure I could work out "the sort of states that may be the appropriate ones".

In the public spending rounds, there's little talk of cutting back on the Trident programme or of cancelling the fourth submarine, HMS Vengeance, currently under construction at Barrow-in-Furness, providing valuable jobs where few exist. Crease estimates that cancelling Vengeance would have saved more than a billion pounds.

Many would find the MoD's rationalisation of the need for the fourth submarine less than convincing. We need a vessel permanently on patrol, ready to fire, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year — the argument goes — and a second to take over when that one returns from its three-month patrol. We need a third to take over when the first two submarines go into refit. And then a fourth as insurance in case anything goes wrong.

Taxpayers may well argue that a huge amount of their money could be saved and spent on schools and hospitals or tax cuts. The ministry would respond that with nuclear deterrence you don't take risks.

Peter Taylor is the series reporter of BBC's five-part series, *Defence Of The Realm*, which begins on Thursday. Trident Countdown will be shown on August 15 at 10pm.



Nose brush with the law

Why did Beefy and Lamby lose that court case?

JONATHAN MARGOLIS has a hair-raising theory

WHEN I first saw how the jury in the Imran Khan versus Ian Botham and Allan Lamb libel case reached its verdict, but is it possible that its decision in the Pakistani's favour and against the home-grown "Beefy" and "Lamby" was swayed by a reaction against their mustaches?

Could this, indeed, be the moment for all mustache wearers to reconsider their facial arrangements? Let me first define what I mean by mustache. I am not referring to the often pleasing ruggedness of a decent, neither too-bushy, nor too-trimmed, beard and mustache. Neither, of course, am I even countenancing the pervert special, that horror movie prop, the mustache-less beard, which acts usefully for its wearers as a recognised diploma of insanity.

The mustache in the dock is the British bloke's version, the slightly aggressive, carefully trimmed little nose brush, that droops down a regulation half an inch or so with the curve of the mouth to differentiate it from a Hitler, Stalin or a Basil Fawlty.

The Botham/Lamb mustache — they share the identical design — is the secondary sexual characteristic of choice for plainclothes policemen trying to look cool, for pilots with immaculately pressed shirts and over-heat the knots, but lacking the balls to go for the full Dambuster handbar job. And, let us not forget, for homosexual men.

I would not want to accuse the High Court jury of homophobia, and even less to suggest that Beefy, Lamby (or, by implication sportsmen like David Seaman and Nigel Mansell) are gay, which would go down very badly in their world and probably land us, following Imran's example, in the High Court.

They do, however, happen to have mustaches of a style not dissimilar from that beloved of gay men, while Imran does not. And Imran did, a little unexpectedly, win the libel case. It's not quite QED, but you have to wonder, don't you?

The curious thing about the bloke's bloke mustache is that as far as I can tell, no woman in recorded history has ever liked it. They will snog it all right — ask David Niven, or even Mrs Botham and Mrs Lamb — but among themselves, women regard such a mustache as an unfortunate by-product of maleness. Like competitive burping, or farting in bed, only slightly less attractive.

Why, then, do the likes of Botham and Lamb wear it, when it makes them look either gay or like Detective Sergeant in the RTUC, and does nothing particular for the opposite sex? Is it perversion? Or bravery?

With the help of a degree I just awarded myself in the semantics of personal grooming (self-assessed modicum, University of Ilford) I believe I have found an answer. The Botham/Lamb mustache is not designed to attract women or men. It is the human equivalent of the large patches of scarlet on certain male monkeys' display on their bottom. Its purpose is not to impress fe-

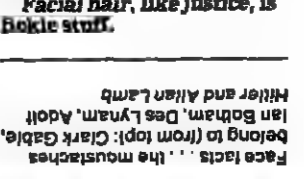
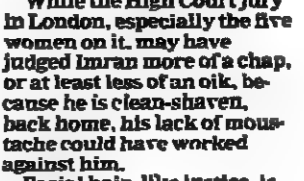
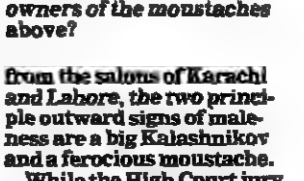
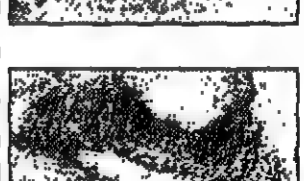
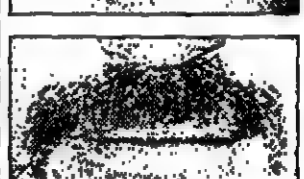
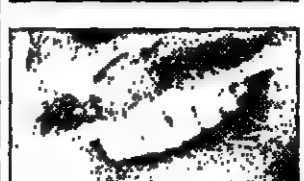
males, nor to invite fellow males to come on in, but to warn the world in general that the wearer is one potent and dangerous animal.

Since Botham and Lamb generally wear trousers and underpants in public, which rules out any ostentatious show of primary pubic hair, their mustaches parade their maleness in such settings as pubs and courtrooms. Such is the subtlety of sexual signalling that they are prepared to be mistaken for homosexual, because they know they could deal briskly with any gay man who mistakenly tried to proposition them.

The almost intentional ambiguity is the same as that of the male drivers of large sports cars. We know instinctively that such men have small penises; yet there must be a proportion of Porsche drivers who are adequately hung. The sports car driver who has a large penis, knowing this fact, must get some perverse satisfaction from the sneering *hot polo!* belting he does not.

The irony of the Imran Khan story, of course, is that in rural Pakistan, away

Man and moustache



Well groomed, or big droops? Can you name the owners of the mustaches above? (From top: Ian Botham, Des Lynam, Adolf Hitler and Allan Lamb)

I'm not sure . . . and certainly I could be wrong about this



Martin Kettle

LIKE most other people, I do not wish to think of myself as a morally defective person. Although I adhere to no religion and never have done, I hope I could satisfy a court of my peers — or even of my betters — that I know the difference between right and wrong or good and evil. Like most people of my acquaintance, I believe I have generally decent values which I uphold, I hope without undue self-deception or priggishness, to apply with a reasonable approximation of consistency. I think of myself

as a moral liberal with conservative tendencies, though occasionally these days I sense that it may be more the other way around than it used to be. But I know what it is to be outraged and the feeling of indignation is certainly not foreign to my nature. I possess, in short, what I consider to be a moral compass in tolerable working order.

Why is it then, that I simply do not share the intensity which afflicts so many others when they confront the fate of a fridge-full of tiny human embryos? I understand, at some philosophical level or other, the issues which grip other people about these unwanted embryos. But I am not as emotionally seized by these questions as they are. I cannot equate the embryos with the authoritative passion, outlook and language of which some people are impressively capable. To speak of the dilemma posed by their existence as matters of life and death is to use language which I simply do not understand in this context.

Naturally, I am both interested and concerned when people whom I respect express intense opinions which I cannot share. But in the end I still don't get it. These principles of life do not engage my conscience to the degree which they do to other people. I feel about the embryos much as I do about eating oysters, a bit squeamish but not insuperably so. If it fell to me to have to flush the embryos down the loo, or whatever it is that happens to them, I would do it without feeling guilty.

Such an action would not, in my view, make me the moral equivalent of Erich Priebke, the former SS captain who was acquitted in Rome this week of a mass murder of Italians in 1944. But it is fairly clear that some people would find the distinction impossible to draw. I find the difference between these two perceptions extraordinary and distressing. To me, the gulf between the treatment of the minuscule embryos and the shooting of the Italian martyrs is so over-

whelmingly obvious as to be barely worth elaborating in intelligent company. Yet to others this is merely a particularly stark piece of moral relativism of the kind which they deem to be corrupting the future of mankind.

None of this means that I am enthusiastic about embryology or about the creation of a modern empire of medical research into human infertility. By and large, I think I am opposed to experimentation with and on embryos. My instinct is that the reproductive process ought in general to be left alone, on grounds of prudence rather than principle, though I am very uncomfortably aware that very close friends have achieved immense happiness from the fact that my views do not hold sway.

I do not believe that human beings should refrain from interfering with "nature" in general, and it is obvious to me from only a nano-second of thought that such a position would ridicule the whole

course of human history. Nevertheless, I do not see that there is a human right to have children, and I am extremely uneasy about anything which involves medical scientists creating life or attempting to purify the human stock, even from the best of motives.

A goal-scorer who doesn't score goals tends to get dropped from the team sharpish

I have, in other words, a mixture of views. I am certain of some of them, and less sure of others. Some are consistent with one another, while many are undoubtedly not. I accept unreservedly that there are large gaps in my knowledge and understanding, not to say also in my moral sense. Under cross-examination or emo-

tional pressure I can confidently say that I would change my mind about some of my attitudes. I suspect, though I do not know this for certain, that the jumble of instincts, thoughts and beliefs I am expressing are typical of many people, and perhaps of rather more people than appear the problem with such apparent certainty.

I am not, however, a congenital relativist. When I am asked for my opinion about the privatisation of the railways, to take the first example which comes into my head, I can give a clear answer. I am opposed to it on all grounds and, even though privatisation may have produced some incidental benefits which I would wish to retain and though the cost of reversing it would be large, I want it reversed nonetheless. When I am asked for my opinion about embryos, however, I falter. And in faltering, I am fairly sure, I am neither alone nor wrong.

I wonder whether this is because I do not really have an opinion about the embryos at all. What I do have are views, and having views is rather different from having an opinion. Maybe it is a bogus distinction, but it still seems to me that there are some questions on which views are much more important than an opinion.

Views to me are exploratory, incomplete and subject to constant modification. They are embodied in conversation and discussion and do not pretend to completeness. Whereas opinions are lawyers' and priests' things, definitive, climactic and conclusive in the arbitrarily stayed manner of all things that are written down.

ness of all conclusions remains with me to this day. Just about my favourite quotation in all our history is Cromwell's remark to the Church of Scotland: "I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken" and I was glad to read recently that Karl Marx's favourite motto was "De omnibus dubitandum" (which does not mean "Never rely on the buses"). I have always had a soft spot for Arthur Ballfour on account of his authorship of *A Defence Of Philosophic Doubt*; therefore, I feel, was my kind of politician.

When you are employed by an editor to have opinions, it is hard not to feel a pricking of anxiety about admitting to not having one. After all, a goal-scorer who doesn't score goals tends to get dropped from the team pretty sharpish. By the same token, an opinion-former without an opinion ought to be a candidate for the bench, too. But not, I would argue and hope, so long as he continues to have views.

Liabile to fall foul of libel

MATTHEW Engel concludes that the Botham libel action will send out a clear warning to potential litigants that the "libel casino" is as safe as Lloyds of London...

It is not only the vexed question of ball-tampering but the broader and more troubling issue of racism in cricket that has been left unresolved by this trial.

The two issues are related. Imran's argument, confirmed by Geoff Boycott and Mike Atherton in court, has been that so-called ball-tampering was commonplace in cricket and that therefore it was invidious to single out the Pakistanis as offenders.

The double-standard mars even the Guardian's coverage. The video evidence which Matthew Engel claims "clearly showed [Botham] manipulating, quite legally, a ball that had gone out of shape" was no more or less conclusive than the video evidence that was used to condemn an entire team...

YET again we see how out of touch with real life our legal system is, that 15 days of court time could be wasted on a squabble between three middle-aged children...

No smoke without advertising

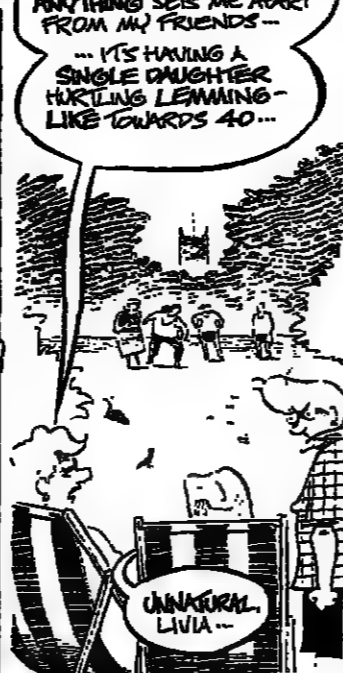
ALONG with Peter Preston, I was at the advertising industry seminar in Cambridge (Why cigarettes are hard to stub out, August 2). I proposed the ending of advertisers' "freedom" to promote tobacco...

RECENT reports of a link between smoking and cot death are not based on a new "theory", as suggested by Joanna Cleary (Letters, July 30) but on the latest research. The Confidential Enquiry into Stillbirths and Deaths in Infancy (CESDI) interviewed the families of 186 cot deaths...

Millennium Basin



Millennium Basin



Millennium Basin



Millennium Basin



Millennium Basin



Aimed at the wrong target

YOUR proposition that gun owners are responsible for the actions of an evil pervert who obtained a Firearms Certificate from an incompetent and negligent firearms licensing department (umping the gun, Leader, August 1) just doesn't make sense. The police have a legal duty not to grant a Firearms Certificate to someone unfit to be entrusted with firearms...

Douglas Hurd said that "the public have lost confidence in our firearms licensing system" and then brought in the most evil and pernicious legislation that did absolutely nothing to address that point. Demands for gun bans and punitive restrictions are based on the misconception that gun control saves lives. Evidence demonstrates that countries with strict and draconian gun-control measures have worse overall crime statistics than jurisdictions with reasonable laws...

THE Snowdrop Appeal's promoters make the fundamental error of assuming that a mass killer such as Hamilton actually needs a gun in order to carry out a mass killing. In the light of the Oklahoma bombing and the pipe bomb detonated in Atlanta, the campaigners for a ban on handguns should reflect that the emotional cripple, Thomas Hamilton, could just as easily have vented his resentment against the whole community of Dumble in a far more devastating way by constructing and detonating a car bomb...

Faith, hope and charity for Blair

CATHERINE Bennett falls to understand a key difference in those messianic role-callers Tony Blair and US evangelist Morris Cerullo (For unto us a Tony Blair was sent, July 31). While both offer renewal to Britain's woes, Blair offers it in this world, while with Cerullo one must wait for the hereafter. Blair's agenda is tangible: 250,000 young people off the dole, the poor receiving opportunities they currently don't have, and the reduction of class sizes. Cerullo's, however, is a more abstract "pie in the sky when you die", with even his wide claims falling foul of the temporal Advertising Standards Authority. Cerullo's rage against the ASA's legitimate censorship of his religious manipulation demonstrates another difference: the characteristic of charity. Far from Blair rejecting this element, he has demonstrated charity, translated love in modern texts, in his continuing willingness to appeal to the rebellious left to engage with his vision...

MORRIS Cerullo, Savannah, Georgia, David Kresh, Catherine Bennett's role call for Blair lookalikes certainly went for the jugular. As usual with political pundits commenting on religion, she misses the point. Yes, Blair goes to church. Yes, Blair believes that his faith matters to his politics. Yes, he believes that a moral purpose and direction are a vital part of the renewal of Britain. But to suggest that Blair has ever, or will ever, stand as a "Christian candidate" is simple mischief-making. Indeed, he was keen to point out this Easter that he was specifically not asking anyone to vote for him because he was a Christian, that he distrusted those who wore their Christianity on their sleeve, and that socialism did not have a monopoly on Christianity. What matters about Blair is his determination that what Labour promises in advance of the election is exactly what it delivers. Yet many Labour activists now have a grossly inflated idea of what a Labour government will be able to achieve, at least in a first term. The truth about Blair is that he says what he has always believed. Of course Labour should have faith - in its own endeavour. But that faith must be informed by critical self-analysis and realism. Chris Bryant, Christian Socialist Movement, 36 Old Quay, London SW1H 9JF.

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The doves overcome the Hawk

YOU call our recent acquittal on charges of criminal damage to a Hawk fighter, a "perverse decision". (Hawke, July 31). This was not a perverse decision, but one based on law. We presented a legal defence - that of using reasonable force to prevent crime. The judge allowed this defence to be put and the jury studied the evidence, accepted it. The jury found that the action we took to prevent the Hawks killing people in East Timor was justified in law. The defence exists in law but is intended to cover cases such as committing an assault to stop a burglary. "Is it any less legitimate to use force to prevent murder and genocide? The law is being broken, but not by us. The law against genocide is being broken by British Aerospace selling Hawks to the brutal Indonesian dictatorship. We have been held accountable by the courts for our actions, but British Aerospace and the British government are flouting the law with impunity. We took full responsibility for our actions, but British Aerospace and the British government are ignoring theirs. Now that we've been acquitted, it is time to bring the real criminals to account. Joanna Wilson, Angie Zelter, Andrea Needham, Lotte Kronlid, Seeds of Hope, East Timor Ploughshares, Box 5, 55 Queen Margaret's Grove, London N1 4PZ. KATE Figeis is wrong in assuming the East Timorese have not heard about the British Ploughshares case. During the six months that these women were in jail, at least one visitor to East Timor informed gatherings of people about their action to disarm a Hawk aircraft. The World Service reports of the trial outcome would have been heard by listeners in East Timor and Indonesia. They would, I am sure, have been heartened to learn that a UK jury had the humanity to uphold the women's actions and reject British Aerospace's and this government's assistance in genocide. Nancy Jenkins, 17 Winchfield Rd, Liverpool L15 5BU.

In praise of the body beautiful

IS IT not time that we learnt that the healthy human body is something natural, beautiful and yet fragile. It seems strange that in Britain it is seen as a democratic right for citizens to retain hand guns but not to practice naturism on wind-swept remote beaches (Naturists lovers recoil at sight of beach bums, July 31). This is a contrast to Denmark where the activity of the Naturist Four on such a remote beach would be acceptable. The Central Council for Beach Naturists (CCBN) should be applauded for their lobbying of Parliament to sweep away anachronistic bylaws. Edward Ebdon, 12 Broadway Court, 82 Overbury Avenue, Beckenham, Kent BR3 6PY. WAS sorry to read that the parish council in Margate had given the thumbs down to the idea of creating a Wallace Walk and a Gromit Grove. But perhaps they have a spare piece of open ground they could name Nick Park. Tim Mansel, 88 Cotleigh Road, London NW6 2NE. JAMES Meek's report (July 31) on the Russian-born Israeli citizen, Gedalia Wald who has bought up a bankrupt Soviet collective farm makes interesting reading. Jewish farmers in Tsarist and Soviet Russia have been few and far between. One rare exception was David Bronstein who farmed in the Caucasus during the latter part of the 19th century. Like Mr Wald, he also had expectations that his son would inherit the property. The son, Lev Davidovich, had other ambitions and went on to make a name for himself as Leon Trotsky. Michael Faulstich, 17 Gratton Terrace, London NW2 6QE.

Still birth rights

AS A parish priest I have just taken a short service for a couple who have recently experienced a still birth. Their child was under 26 weeks old. Because of the size and the policy of the Worcestershire hospital where the still birth took place they were advised by an obstetrician to have a caesarean. That, as parents, they would not be able to organise a funeral. Had he been over 26 weeks old, then things could have been different. Because he was not, he could only be treated like any other foetus - according to the hospital rules. "A milestone in the affairs on men, women or children. Let it pass by, and we conspire in the normalising of organised death." I cannot let our little milestone here pass by. However young the fetus in question, if the parents choose to mark its passing should not a humane society allow them the right? David Partridge, The Parish of Warblington-with-Emsworth, The Rectory, 20 Church Path, Gosport, Hants PO10 7DP. AS A mother of two healthy children which were conceived easily, I am now in a couple who have recently experienced infertility problems. My partner and I are prepared to attempt difficult and painful IVF treatment (at our own expense) so that he has a chance to hold his own baby and watch it grow. Those wonderful things which so many of us take for granted. I am sure that Mr Young does not appreciate how lucky he is when he describes infertility as a "misfortune". It is not just a misfortune, it causes pain, isolation, anger and despair. Christine Rowe, 68 The Mall, Old Town, Swindon SN1 4JG.

Brave new, depressing world

THE depressing aspect of Gordon Brown's answer (in the real world, August 2) to Roy Hattersley's arguments is the running theme that better financial compensation for the largely unemployed constituency and other apparent social failures has no place in Labour's brave new world. Cecil Fudge, Barga Cottage, Church Road, Chertsey, Surrey GU10 2GT. TO give the tortoise quality of opportunity to win a race against the hare, you would need to give it a long start. Alternatively, to be really radical, you could redesignate Sports Day so that it was taking part rather than winning which counted. What Gordon Brown proposes instead is giving the tortoise lots and lots of races to enter throughout life. James Mather, 26 Northway, Northwich CW8 4DF.

A Country Diary

THE BURREN, IRELAND: Our French visitors and Mary Ann decided to scale the "heights" of Ballymore while I kept to the low lands to fulfil my wish of walking round the turlough (disappearing lake) at its foot. We had seen from a distance waterlilies on the turlough - these I wished to see up close. Because of dry weather the water had almost disappeared, leaving but a few pools so I set off with high hopes and a stout stick to test the ground ahead lest I sink! All seemed easy at first but I soon discovered beneath my feet a veritable constellation of wild flowers and insects. My efforts to avoid treading on them resulted in a walk like that of a drunken sailor, made worse by myriads of disturbed butterflies, moths and leaping frogs. What a paradise! - shrubby cinquefoil, late mountain avens, orchids: deep pink pyramidal, O'Kelly's white, fragrant, purple/pink wild thyme patches, yellow ladies' bedstraw, maidenhair fern, gold Aztec-headed carting thistles, harebells. However as I got nearer my target, the waterlilies, I realised I could not get close as rushes grew well over my head and the whole lily bearing pool was circled by a deep "moat". On I trudged, now through shrubby cinquefoil (potentilla fruticosa), now over rocks where hazel grew and spread horizontally. I stopped to examine a hazelnut - pale green, its tip suffused with very pink. Then I noticed a deep small pool, floating on its surface were four waterlilies and hovering above them dragon and damselflies. I also saw two hovering matchstick-like (but thinner) opaque blue, seemingly wingless insects. Annoyingly, none of my reference books help me to identify them. I scrambled back in the perfunctory air amongst a cloud of butterflies which matched the darting swallows overhead so that I did not know whether I was "dreaming" I was a butterfly or that "I was human"! SARAH POYNTZ

سكنا من الاجل

Why has Yorkshire's chief constable been given such a pasting this week for daring to suggest prostitution should be legal?

It doesn't need to be a jungle out there



The Joanna Coles interview

ONE evening, shortly after Keith Hellawell started work as an eager young copper in Yorkshire, he arrested a prostitute. The next morning he was studied to hear that the chief constable wanted to see him. "Ah, Hellawell," snorted the chief, over his desk. "Congratulations! I see that last night you arrested a young lady for loitering."

"Actually, sir," said Hellawell brightly, "I arrested her for prostitution."

"Oh, no, you didn't," snapped the chief constable. "You arrested her for loitering. You see Constable Hellawell, we don't have any prostitutes in this town."

You might not think so from the exterior of the redbrick Victorian West Yorkshire Police HQ, but times do change. Thirty five years on and it is Hellawell swinging his legs from the chief constable's chair and this week provoking a cyclone of criticism by suggesting that not only do prostitutes exist but that their activities should actually be legalised.

It's a view he has held for years, together with the idea that we should, at the very least, be exploring the possibilities of legalising some drugs. Not since James Anderson, Greater Manchester's ex-chief, announced that God had spoken to him about Aids, have we had such an outspoken copper. But unlike Anderson, Hellawell speaks serious. He also puts the fear of God into Michael Howard.

It has, however, cost him. For the usual has started to happen — the Tory tabloid press have decided that he's a raving liberal and embarked on a gentle drip-drip smear campaign. You labour the point of just where the dirt is power. "Gucci shoes" (untrue), "monogrammed shirts" (untrue), "drives a black Porsche" (untrue, he drives a Jeep), "owns a Ferrari" (untrue), "owns a Ferrari" (untrue). He was a detective on the case and three years ago Satelife told him about two un-

resolved attempted murders.) Then there was the recent case of Hellawell's eldest daughter, a police officer in West Yorkshire, who woke up to find an unmarked van outside her front door containing reporters from the Sun and the Daily Mail. When Hellawell rang the editors to find out what was going on, he discovered two stories doing the rounds. One, her (black) ex-husband had been suspended from the force and was now dealing drugs (untrue). Two, her ex-husband was so peeved by the divorce he had, as an act of revenge, sent an obscene message to 50 female police officers on e-mail (untrue).

"All nonsense, nonsense," says Hellawell calmly, sipping black sugarless tea in his comfortable, oddly silent office. "But these are the penalties for speaking out. People describe me as if I live in the fast track out the back of a 55-year-old grandfather. I jog to keep my weight down, and I like gardening and walking."

It's not hard to see where some of the exaggeration comes from. For a man dressed in navy double-breasted suit and yellow floral tie, he seems shockingly stylish for a chief constable. Rumoured to be the model for Anglia TV's 'The Chief' (played by Martin Shaw), he resembles a handsome Canadian husky, with slanting eyes that hold your stare. He is also passionate about his specialist subjects, drugs (he's spokesman for the Association of Chief Police Officers), prostitution and technology, talking at surprising length and refusing the temptations of the soundbite.

His most common phrase during our chat was, "I'm not avoiding that question, but let me put it into context." Ten minutes later he answers the original question in such detail and depth I feel embarrassed that I'm not writing a book. Another of his refrains is, "There are no quick resolutions." "No wonder the tabloids catch copes," he says, echoing the most over-used phrase of the decade, though for once I believe it. "If you write that, a lot of people will say, 'Oh, he says that, he's a right smooth buggar.' But I don't like it. I talk about these issues, prostitution and drugs, as a chief constable, but there are very few benefits as an individual for doing it."

"Number one, you're open to criticism. Why? Because I keep his mouth shut? You don't want to talk about these things." Number two, "This guy likes

publicity' so your personal credibility is tarnished with vanity. Number three, you've got this 'Well, if he's prepared to put himself forward, he's fair game. I'm not a politician, but there's a personal toll on doing this on you and your family. I'm doing it because I believe in it. And I know from experience what it's like to be at the bottom of the heap."

This, I presume, is a tantalising reference to his childhood in Holmfirth, which he won't be drawn on except to remark that he walked out of school on his 18th birthday, armed only with a report claiming "good at sport and nothing else". An attempt to join the police failed when "they told me to come back in a few years when I had some wool on my back". A week later, he found himself squeezed into an 18-inch seam down the local pit. "Put it this way — I had to look after myself."

At the age of 21, he decided to get married and re-try the police because he wanted security and a house. This time he was admitted. Shortly afterwards he was given his first prostitute in Huddersfield. "At the time, I didn't understand why there was this desire to say prostitutes didn't exist when clearly they did." It was an attitude he would come across again. "In the mid-1980s, I recommended we set up a drugs squad. The chief constable said: 'But we don't have a drugs problem here.' It doesn't apply today, the police force is much more sophisticated."

But I wonder if he's true to the fact that no matter how often the arguments for legalising prostitution are aired, our unworkable laws never seem to change? "I didn't set out to heighten the debate for legalisation, those are just my views. It is a very, very difficult debate towards his desk. 'The letters I've received show the polarisation of opinion.' They also show the public's ignorance about the depth of the problem. "I'm not flying a kite here, this is a real problem. It's not like the body of a 23-year-old girl, amputated, and all that she has is a bed, a bin in which there are condoms and evidence of drugs, a table, a chair and a TV set. She's a person. Formerly chief constable of Cleveland, he witnessed the aftermath of the notorious child abuse case. "Look at our double standards," he snaps. "If a 15-year-old child is abused in the family, we all gather round. If a 15-year-old out there is selling her body with five or six men a day, not using a condom because she's too spaced out, we label her a prostitute or criminal! The current laws aren't working, all these things are going wrong."



ish prime minister pledging him or herself to making brothels legal? "There isn't a strong political will to face it. It's a sensitive issue, there's a lot of not-in-my-backyard. During the Ripper inquiry, we found that the partners of men who used prostitutes didn't want to know. They wouldn't believe it, even when they were indirectly involved. We didn't tell them," he adds quickly. "But some of the men we questioned felt they had to. "Prostitution's not high on the community agenda, people aren't starving, they're not at war with someone. It's distasteful. We don't talk about these things, that's why there is no immediate reaction. But every time it's aired, it informs discussion and people do learn more. And it allows local authorities to feel more comfortable with what they're doing."

What are they doing? "For example, in Edinburgh and in some of our cities, they turn a blind eye to massage parlours. They know the law is being broken, and they know they are colluding. In some instances they do it hoping no one will find out, keep the lid on it. But when it comes out in the open and they see there isn't a strong negative reaction, it gives them moral support. "I can call it that: they still have to fudge or bend or ignore the laws but at least they feel the public is saying, 'Look we're not ready to change the law, but we're not going to recommend that all the massage parlours be raided tomorrow morning.'"

I confess I can't get over the fact that I am listening to a chief constable saying this... "There's a misconception about the police service," he says briskly. "The traditional idea of it being very right-wing, conservative with a small or even a large C, is not true. Time has moved on. "It used to be that chief constables would meet for dinner once a year at the Savoy. That was the only meeting they had about crime in this country! But law and order is a political debate now, we're getting into the social issues of the day."

And Hellawell loves this challenge. "I enjoy every part of it. It really is a privilege to be a chief constable, especially of the force I joined, where I was born, and the place where I shall die."

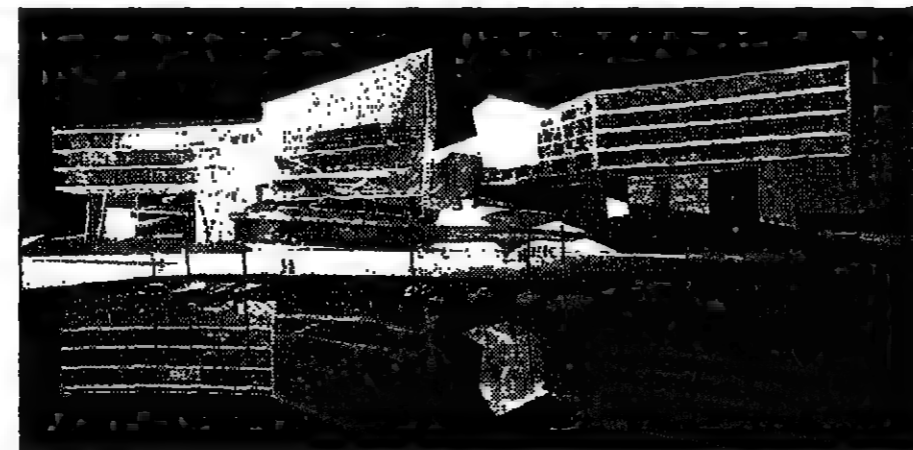
Does he, I wonder, have to think like a criminal to catch criminals? "No. You have to understand people. I'm proud to be a Yorkshireman and I'm proud to be British. I haven't seen another community I would swap Britain for and I'm proud of the opportunities that it's given me. As he prepares to go home, a pale press officer suddenly appears with an urgent request: "It's CNN. They want to do an interview with you, to go worldwide. Hellawell shakes his head. "No, I'm going home. I'm done to go jogging with my wife." And with that he is gone. You see, he really does hate publicity.

How the Glass Necklace sank in Cardiff Bay

DAN GLAISTER on the shabby treatment meted out to a prestige Millennium building project

ASSIDUOUS readers of the Official Journal of the Millennium Commission would have come across a rather perplexing announcement a few weeks ago. Invitation to tender, it stated, for proposed Millennium Arts Heritage Centre in Cardiff Bay. Architects were invited to submit proposals for a centre comprising a 2,000-seater auditorium, a People And The Sea Museum, an Imax cinema, a retail and commercial space, and a home for Welsh National Opera. Applicants should apply in the first instance to the Wales Millennium Centre.

The announcement is the latest but surely not the last episode in a sorry affair that has exposed the haphazard nature of public building in this country. It is the story of a gifted architect who did not fit in, of the mismanagement of the Millennium celebrations, of the confused role of public consultation, and of the power of the "Taffia".



fundamentum, the idea for an opera house on the bay took off, a musical theatre that would be an architectural landmark for the Welsh capital. An international architectural competition was announced. The competition was won by Iranian-born Zaha Hadid, with an imaginative design nicknamed the "glass necklace". Immediately there were problems: budget estimates varied from £43 million to £84 million; an exhibition to encourage debate about the project provoked a mixture of apathy and hostility. Hadid became famous in the tabloids for one of her previous achievements, designing a fire station in Germany. And the scheme garnered allegations of elitism. "The impression was of a project drifting without leadership, effectively left to referendum."

Hadid's design became the subject of drawn-out negotiations, normal for a competition but unhelpful in the circumstances. A modified design and financial package met with the approval of the Cardiff Bay Opera Trust, but in December 1995 the Millennium Commission turned it down. The commission, which includes no artists or architects, expressed concern about the two technicians of lottery-inspired capital projects, partnership funding and revenue

from the Millennium Commission, the National Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Arts Council of Wales. A meeting was set up for March this year between the trust and the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation, aka the "Taffia", a collection of the great and the good of Cardiff. At the meeting, to which Hadid was not invited, the scheme was killed. The project to bring a high-profile cultural centre to Cardiff, hyped as doing for Cardiff what the

more carefully regulated and more likely to receive public funding. "Architects spend an enormous amount of time on plans that never go anywhere," he says. "You cannot have an answer unless the question is properly set. At an international level we're going to look ridiculous."

The new competition will be a referendum, not design-based, arousing suspicions that the scheme will be given to a safe pair of hands, that the emphasis will be on financial probity rather than the sort of landmark architecture that the project merits and that the Millennium Commission was formed to engender.

"We now know a lot more about what the lottery funders are looking for," says Freddy Watson, a retired businessman and non-voting member on the original jury, who is acting as spokesman for the CBD. "The parent body behind the new proposal. 'The first trust was dominated by the Opera. This time it is broader from the start. In fairness,' he admits, "that was the case in the previous competition, but it was not the perception. We've got to get the business side right this time. It's the last bus."

Touch of glass... Zaha Hadid's updated vision of a Sydney Opera House for Cardiff



£10 BUYS A CHAIN CUTTER

He's chained up through his sensitive nose and made to walk on red hot plates, whilst the back of his legs are left in time to music. Onlookers taunt him and force him to drink beer. Why? Because they're teaching him to 'dance' for tourists who pay to watch his agonising waltz.

Form for WSPA donation: YES, I WANT TO CUT THE CHAINS! Please send this completed form and your donation to: WSPA, Dept ALBA, Forepost 14/2074, Northampton, MK3 8SR. Tel: 01605 252222. THANK YOU. Registered Charity no.282508

Handwritten signature or mark at the bottom of the page.

Sci-fi author Ray Bradbury has it all: film credits, literary superstardom — even a crater on the moon named after one of his books. On the eve of the publication of his new short stories, he talks to TOM HUTCHINSON

My life among the stars

WHEN American publishers choke on the Old Testament, they clear their throats by quoting Ray Bradbury. Their excuses from Moses direct them into the promised lands of the veteran science fiction writer.

Bradbury discovered that some Bible-belters were getting uplift from him when they wrote to thank him. "I was so flattered, I had letters saying that some of them were reading my more optimistic fiction from the pulpit. And the congregations were going for it."

So what did he do? What any American go-getter would do. Like one of the pioneering people about whom he wrote so persuasively in *The Martian Chronicles* and *The Golden Apples of the Sun*, he set out on the badwagon of the main chance.

To coincide with the September publication of *Quicker Than The Eye*, a book of new and original short stories published in September in the States, he's also written a Chap-Book For Burnt-Out Rabbits, Priests And Ministers. "That's specially for those who would like an alternative. I may not believe in their personal religions, but I have tremendous faith in the Cosmos, in the Life Force for good."

A forgivable belief in himself, too. As the premiere of the spectacular science-fiction movie *Independence Day* looms over us like a vast mother-ship, Bradbury has taken out an advertisement in *Daily Variety* urging that *The Martian Chronicles* be similarly filmed. "The ad cost me 4,000 bucks, but I wanted producers to know it was still available. There was a lengthy TV series, based on the book, which was a bore. It is a book that needs all the new tricks that have been developed."

Raymond Douglas Bradbury is 76 next month, but he's still a mighty player on America's literary and media scene, proclaiming that *Independence Day* proves something he has always said,

something film-makers were too stupid to understand: that fantasy always makes money at the box-office. "There was a cinema just round the block which showed *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* movies non-stop. It's still running. It's not just because it's all a great escape. It's because it's great fun."

"You know, *Independence Day*, with its threat of alien invasion, is a throwback to the paranoid SF film of the fifties. *The Day The World Stood Still* or my own *It Came From Outer Space*. With this new film the aliens mean us harm. To that extent it's anti-ET or *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*, with creatures that mean us good. Once again we're under threat."

Christopher Isherwood called Bradbury a poet, chubby and bespectacled, he is still a man with a head full of singing birds, though now they've been orchestrated to sing to a pitch that makes him



one of the richest writers around. For me, he is not so much a visionary as a way of life, since we became friends many years ago when his book of horror stories, *Dark Carnival*, was published. They are the best written this century and deserve re-printing.

Since then he has become a literary superstar. He was an ideas man for Disney and Disney's Epicot. "Wald Disney said, 'I'm a genius and you're a genius, we won't get on.' But we did." He's even been an architectural adviser. The Apollo 15 astronauts named a moon-indentation Dandelion Crater after his book *Dandelion Wine*.



Dressed to thrill... Bradbury in the halcyon days of sci-fi and (above left) his *Beast From 20,000 Fathoms* MICHAEL CHILDS

His creativity still revs at top speed. The man who earned his first money in literature at the age of 15, by writing gags for comedian George Burns, has just written a treatise for *The Shaw Society* with a title as unwieldy as his ideas are simple — GBS: *Refurbishing The Tin Woodman; Science Fiction With A Heart, A Brain And The Nerve*. It's the Shavian idea of a life-force to which he corresponds.

He speaks with brimming enthusiasm: "I know it sounds painfully corny, but every minute of being alive is an adventure, a festival of discovery." Part of that ongoing euphoria is in being married to Maggie, who has borne him four daughters, so that he now has seven grandchildren and a rivalry with one daughter, who has collected an Emmy (for producing and writing a famous TV soap opera) to contend with his.

But, for a writer, he has had

When scripting Moby Dick, John Huston sent two boxers round to beat him up because of a disagreement

a life rich in physical incident outside his imagination. One of the most horrendous was scripting *Moby Dick* for a John Huston who, while they were in Ireland, sent round two boxers to beat him up because of a disagreement. Bradbury escaped the boxers, but not the trauma of the event.

Years later he went up to the great man in a restaurant. "I want you to know I forgive you," he said. "You changed my life." Maggie said: "But you hate him so. Why did you do that?" Bradbury responded: "But he did change my life — for the better. After *Moby Dick* I could take my talent anywhere." He wrote a

novel about Huston, though to fully exorcise the experience from his system.

He has always seen Hollywood as, literally, a Planet Hollywood: a place where human beings become alien in their dealings with each other. When he was asked to script *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms* he realised it had been plagiarised from his own story, *The Foghorn*. Shamefacedly, the producer paid up for the rights.

"It's not that people in Hollywood are naturally dishonest; it's just that some of them feel that they have to be."

Ray Bradbury bears them no grudges, but he wishes that movies had happier endings. "What I mean is that villains should get their comeuppance. Burt Lancaster in *The Sweet Smell of Success* played an evil man; at the end he should have been thrown from a skyscraper. Instead he survived.

"Films are for solving life. Not for making it more difficult."

He can be difficult himself, though. "I was at a party where people were making fun of the human race reaching the moon. And I took their telephone numbers. When a man actually landed on the moon, I rang them up in the middle of the night and said, 'You see, it happened you stupid jerk.'"

He plans mightily ahead. He wants to write another treatise, on the way Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* resembles Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*: "Captain Ahab is the reverse of Captain Nemo. And I can prove it in so many ways."

He left me to go by Eurotunnel to Paris, where he is to holiday with his beloved Maggie in his beloved France. A man who has seen his dreams become reality around him. A realisation man for all futuristic seasons.

Later I got a note thanking me for being his guest at luncheon. He had paid for the lunch. They don't make men with manners like that these days. Unless, of course, they come from other planets.

Does Peter Middleton's report mean British film has a bright future, asks SIMON HATTENSTONE

On the Right track

SIR PETER Middleton stares out of his window on to a Thames-side view of the finest that London can offer. "It's just like a film set," he says.

Sir Peter is rather interested in film sets at the moment. Yesterday, his report on the future of British film was published. The chair of the banking group BZW and former Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, he chaired the Advisory Committee on Film Finance, which, after six months, has produced a template for a born-again British film industry.

Industry. That's what Sir Peter wants. An industry to replace that of coal or steel or cars. An industry Britain can be proud of, one that will boost the economy and our culture.

What is he proposing? Is he about to map out the Hollywood of Europe that the fellow knight David Puttnam likes to talk about? Yes and no, he says. It's daft to pretend we can blockbuster our way to *Independence Day* — but, you know, there's a lot to recommend that. It has never been allowed to develop on the scale needed. And without sufficient scale, you're never going to attract investors. In Britain, we're asked to invest in a single film, but it simply doesn't make economic sense. The risk has to be spread over a number of projects to make it worthwhile. BZW would invest in a similar way. People complain that Hollywood is run by accountants, but we could do with a bit of that."

Sir Peter's proposal is radical. His committee has decided on one giant, national studio — although initially we may have to settle for three mini-studios until the project matures, by means of a Derwinton work-out, into one enterprise.

He elaborates: it won't be a physical studio where people go to make their films, but an organisation film-makers approach to ask whether they can please have some money to make their movie.

And it will distribute films, too. This is an area where home-grown movies have consistently been betrayed. Take



Middleton... his report to the Department of Heritage proposes a single national studio for the British films

Ken Loach's *Land and Freedom*, for instance. Lauded worldwide, there were only 17 prints available in Britain (compared with 120 in France), which meant that despite playing to capacity audiences on tours through the regions, many people never got the chance to see it.

Perfectly logical so far. And who will run the studio? Shouldn't pecking and promoting the best of British be left to the state rather than the conflicting interests of movie moguls and big business? Sir Peter's shoulder-blades twitch. With infinite calm, he explains how the last thing we need is a nationalised film industry. Yes, in the short term, government support is needed. Film-makers should be allowed a 100 per cent write-off of production costs in the year they are incurred. And yes, the lottery would have to stump up £100 million over five years along-side £200 million from the private sector to realise the studio. But, in the long term, the last thing the City would go for is a British film logo. It must be market-led. The studio will be put out to tender.

How will he address that other perennial problem, the refusal of multiplexes to show local films? Has he considered the French practice of bunging the exhibitors a few francs to ensure at least one domestic movie? Yes, he says, but that can never work in an English language speaking country

Holmes on the warpath

Television

Nancy Banks-Smith

WAR WALKS (BBC 2), like a good general, does wonders with very limited resources. The field and farms of Waterloo... one cannon ball... one musket... and one historian, Richard Holmes, terrifies in manner and moustache.

Waterloo literally was a foreign field, a few acres of farmland, fertile with blood and bone. It is very quiet now. The countryside is featureless and flat. The sky is vast and vacant. It was watching a programme about Alexander the Great the other day and heard myself saying urgently, "Air cover! You must have air cover!"

Holmes knocked on the door of La Haye Sainte, which was an abattoir on June 1815. It is still a working farm. The farmer keeps the shot he finds in a pewter pot and is not much troubled with tourists.

"There's nothing to see."

But is there nothing to hear... sometimes... on quiet summer nights?

The 27th Regiment (Linchillings) fought until they fell, still in their square. A small granite headstone records their noble record of stubborn endurance and Wellington's bleak comment: "They saved the centre of my line."

You can tell that this was not a man to waste breath on adjectives. Asked if it was true that he shouted, "Up guards and at 'em!", he denied it. "I probably said, 'Stand up, guards. Make

ready. Fire!" I seem to hear the reporter of the Waterloo Bugle groan. That is not the same thing at all.

The temperamental difference between Napoleon and Wellington is something you can taste. Apart from the obvious clues, guess which one flung open his jacket, showing his bemuddled breast, crying "Soldiers, would you shoot your Emperor?" and which one wrote "PS. I forgot to tell you I was made a duke."

As Sellar and Yeatman said, Napoleon wore his hat like this and Wellington wore his

Watching a programme about Alexander the Great I heard myself saying 'Air cover! You must have air cover!'

hat like that. You just knew they weren't going to get on. However, I did notice that Wellington had a life-sized, naked, marble statue of Napoleon in his London house. Odd, really.

Waterloo was the last, great, bare-knuckle fight.

They seem now like another breed of men. When Lord Paget said "Good God, my leg's been struck off!" Wellington replied "Good God, man, so it has." When Marshal Blicher was ridden over by three French cavalry charges, he got up and headed for the sound of gunfire. He was 78. Endurance

All at sea

Radio

Lyn Gardner

WE ARE on our heels. So is Radio 4. We are by the seaside. Radio 4 has plunged into the Deep. A bit too deep, I'd say, when you are happily splashing about in the shallows you don't want to be told that you are probably up to your knees in seven types of pollution.

This six-week season of dramas and documentaries about the oceans has been pretty doomy so far: global warming, political squabbles, environmental pollution. The sea has got the lot.

Even the common periwinkle is having a rough time. In the first *Tidal Talk*, Bill Wallis played the small-like resident of the shoreline as an end-of-the-pier showman in a dinky resort. "Have you heard the one about the crab prosecuted for possession of hard prawn?"

Tidal Talk, written by Lynne Truss, is produced by the Natural History Unit. Despite the haul of heavy-weight thespians — Alison Steadman as an Olney Yell sea anemone and Judi Dench as the deceptive limpet are yet to come — you get more information than drama. More fishy jokes than anything else. I didn't know that the periwinkle's teeth grow continuously or that sometimes they are eaten by seagulls and evacuated still alive. "My enemy's enemy is my friend," chuckled Perry cheerfully. There's still five weeks of laughs like this to come.

Mike Golding has sailed round the world the wrong way. Shocking news to those like myself who were blissfully ignorant that there is a right way. In the first part of

The Decameron sits heavy on the stomach. But it is nourishing nevertheless. LYN GARDNER reports

Plucky peasant's play

NICK Ward's beautiful version of The Decameron strips the meaning of life right back to the bare essentials: a little wine and food, companionship and sex and storytelling.

But it is far from being cosy. Conor Murphy's strikingly effective, if perilous, set of planks of wood laid like rail-way sleepers across a pit ensures that the refugees from the pestilence weave their stories of love and lechery over an open grave. If love doesn't get you, the plague certainly will. Hell waits with its jaws wide open.

Even food is suspect. An unlucky lover, ashamed of his poverty, serves his beloved his one treasure — his falcon — only to discover that it is the

such as that of Lisabetta — who pots the head of her murdered lover and grows basil on top — are told as asides, this one by the cook who prepares the feast for the survivors. So people die, her busy hands imply as they chop and stir. It's tragic, but that's life: you still have to eat.

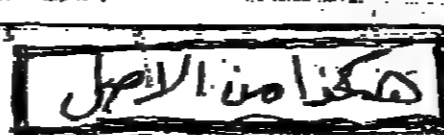
Both men and women are fools for love, although it is the women who — if they don't die of a broken heart — tend to have the last laugh. The grave-robbing-turned-priest who cons one of his parishioners into believing that he is a lusty Angel Gabriel ends up crucified, jealous husbands are unwitting accomplices in their own cuckolding. Love cuts

deep and there is a ruthless irony behind the luxury.

Ward's sweaty, sensual production makes ingenious use of the planks of wood, and although the cast wear their own clothes, their still concentration and grave young faces, make them look like saints in a medieval painting.

One carp: if you sit, as I did, on one of the low wooden benches in the middle row, you will only get half the picture: the bodies of the people in front make it impossible to see any of the action that takes place low down at the far end of the auditorium.

At the Gate, London W11, until August 17 (0171-228 0708).



C L R James - Marxist, Guardian cricket writer and thinker who fired black liberation - was a sage decades ahead of his time. With Trevor McDonald about to bring his classic Beyond a Boundary to radio, MARGARET BUSBY looks forward to his rediscovery by a new generation

Portrait by SNOWDON

Wilderness man... James's works have been scandalously neglected. Below with Margaret Busby in Brixton shortly before his death



Storming the pavilion of prejudice

TWENTY years ago, the books of C L R James - Trinidad-born historian, critic, philosopher, sports commentator, novelist, playwright - were virtually unobtainable in Britain. Since his death in Brixton in 1982 at the age of 88, scarcely a year has passed without at least one addition to the catalogue of James studies. Conferences, institutions and scholars vie to interpret his oeuvre. Only last week the New Yorker devoted five pages to the man they hailed as the Romantic Revolutionary, hailing the emergence from "obscurity" of one of the century's most original minds. "James was always the avant-garde's avant-garde, unknown to the many, attuned by the few," it began, betraying a trace of peevishness that his work is no longer the domain of the "noble handful" who read him in his days of pamphlet obscurity - reminiscent of the food snob who suddenly finds a favourite haunt written up by the Good Food Guide. Though I lay no claim to membership of that select club, the name of Cyril Lionel Robert James - contracted to C.L.R. or Nello - is one that I have known since childhood. He and my father were at school together in Trinidad, both leaving Queen's Royal College in 1918. C.L.R. would go to England in 1932, to the USA in 1938, back to Trinidad in 1958, followed by stints on both sides of the Atlantic, before settling in London for the last decade of his life. My father, after studying medicine in Dublin and practising as a GP in Walthamstow, emigrated to Ghana in 1925. Yet they remained life-long friends, saw each other whenever they could, in which ever country they could meet. Once when my father was in New York and C.L.R. in Washington, my father sent him a plane ticket so that he could join him. Thus it was as a family friend that I was first aware of C.L.R. his visiting fedora balanced on a hat-stand as lanky as himself, rising to the peculiarly Trinidadian humour known as "fatigue" that my father indulged in to tease his old friend for "joining the Bloomsbury set". The copy I now own of Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, is the more precious for its inscription from C.L.R. to my father. Mention of James in our family was no more unusual than a visit to our "bush" home by his remarkable compatriot,

George Padmore, right-hand man of Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah. But years later, as a publisher, the neglect of much key James material rankled with me. Even his masterpiece *The Black Jacobins* was out of print. The only two titles that might be found (with much hunting) in London bookshops were his now classic cricket memoir, *Beyond a Boundary*, and his novel *Minty Alley*, reprinted by Trinidadian John La Rose's New Beacon Books. So in the mid-1970s I undertook the compilation of an extensive James bibliography, which ran to some 50 books and pamphlets, and hundreds of shorter writings. Allison & Busby set about a publishing programme, beginning with his *Selected Writings*, and in the course of the next decade produced nine James volumes. They were well reviewed in the national press, C.L.R. appeared on television, was even photographed with his trademark hat by Snowdon. The revival would surely have continued had not the fickle fortunes of the book trade had other plans for the company. But it was gratifying to see the beginnings of a resurgence of interest in a man whose ideas were so ahead of his time that the wider currency they deserve was so delayed. Among the Jamesians now proliferating - such as his monumental *American Civilization*, published 45 years after its conception, and *Spain's Delivery*, a collection of letters written to Constance Webb, the young American who was to become his wife and bear him a son - one work will forever be missing: his autobiography. It was a project often mooted but never brought to fruition (in a letter of condolence on the father's death in 1980, C.L.R. wrote: "I have only one tiny mite of recompense for all that George has been to me. I shall be able to express it in my autobiography." In its absence, *Beyond a Boundary*, is the text that must substitute, outlining his life until the time of its publication in 1963, synthesised with a re-examination of assumptions about society and the role of culture. James professes it with a caveat: "This book is neither cricket reminiscences nor autobiography. It poses the question, 'What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?'" It shows how the cricket ethic has shaped social life in the West Indies, ex-

plains why James saw no division between his love of sport and his struggle for a just society. Born in Trinidad in 1901, C.L.R. James spent half of each year with his grandmother and two puritanical aunts in the small town of Tunapuna, in a house by the cricket ground. It was "superbly situated, exactly behind the wicket... By standing on a chair a small boy of six could watch practice every afternoon and matches on Saturday... From the chair he could also mount on to the window-sill and so stretch a groping hand for the books on the top of the wardrobe. Thus early the pattern of my life was set." Cricket and literature. His father was a teacher, his



As a philosopher, James (above in old age) embraced Picasso, WG Grace, Shakespeare, the calypsonian Mighty Sparrow and the Greek Olympians with equal ease

mother an avid reader, and as she put books down, young James picked them up. He developed an obsession with Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, reading it on an average once every three months. At the same time, scouring the articles in *The Bits* and other magazines carried by the itinerant bookseller, he zealously amassed statistics and clippings about cricket and cricketers. "A British intellectual before I was 10, an alien in my own environment... My life up to 10 laid the powder for a war that lasted without respite for eight years, and intermittently afterwards - a war between English puritanism, English literature and cricket, and the realism of West Indian life." The Trinidad government offered yearly four free exhibi-

tions to the two secondary schools, the government Queen's Royal College and the Catholic college, St Mary's. Through this narrow gate C.L.R. James, poor but bright, could get a Cambridge Senior Certificate, a passport to a good job. There were even more glittering prizes: three island scholarships worth \$300 each. With one of these a boy could study law or medicine abroad and return with a profession commanding prestige. There were few other roads to independence for a black man. The final achievement was nomination to the Legislative Council. "Exhibition, scholarship, profession, wealth, Legislative Council and the title of Honourable. That was the course marked out for me." (It was also the course my father

whole world around him, and his determination to stick to his own ideas, nothing could have saved me from winning a scholarship, becoming an Honourable Member of the Legislative Council and ruining my whole life." Distracted from academia by his passion for sports (in addition to being a useful cricketer, he held the Trinidad high-jump record for a while) and his relentless pursuit of his extra-curricular reading, James acknowledged that on leaving school in 1918 there was no world for which he was fitted, least of all the one he was to enter. For a time he taught at his old school, while honing his fiction-writing skills, never losing sight of his plan to go abroad. But increasingly he studied the local political situation, and began to prepare a biography of Captain Cipriani, a local white man who had built a mass labour movement. James's opportunity to travel came in 1932, with the encouragement of the great cricketer Learie Constantine, who had gone to England to play for Lancashire and asked James for help with his book, *Cricket and I*. So, carrying manuscripts for both projects, James boarded the boat for Plymouth. "The British intellectual was going to Britain," James took up Constantine's suggestion to join him in Lancashire. "Within five months we were supplementing each other in a partnership that had West Indian self-government as its goal." They were both soon in demand as speakers on cricket and the West Indies. With Learie's help C.L.R. published *The Life of Captain Cipriani*, Leonard and Virginia Woolf's Hogarth Press brought out an abridged version as *The Case for West Indian Self-Government*. James began research for a biography of Toussaint L'Ouverture, leader of the historic 1791 revolt of slaves in San Domingo. (James's play *The Black Jacobins* was produced in London in 1936, featuring Paul Robeson.) "I had no money and there hung over me that shadow of what I was to do to earn some. Cricket came to my rescue."

After watching the sesagarian Sidney Barnes play in a league match in Nelson, James was moved to write an article, which at Learie's instigation sent to Neville Cardus, cricket correspondent for the Manchester Guardian. Cardus was impressed and took him on. James's only novel *Minty Alley* - the first West Indian novel published in Britain - was produced by Secker & Warburg in 1936. But fiction-writing drained out of him, to be replaced by politics, as he began serious study of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Involving himself in British radical politics, he became a leading Trotskyist, a member first of the Independent Labour Party and then of the Revolutionary Socialist League. His history of the Third International, *World Revolution*, was published in 1937, again by Fredric Warburg, who in *An Occupation for Gentlemen* gives this telling description:

JAMES'S memory was extraordinary. He could quote, not only passages from the Marxist classics but long extracts from Shakespeare, in a soft lilting English which was a delight to hear. Immensely amiable, he loved the despatches of capitalism, fine cooking, fine clothes and beautiful women, without a trace of the guilty remorse to be expected from a seasoned warrior of the class war. Night after night he would address meetings in London and the provinces, denouncing the crimes of the blood-thirsty Stalin, until he was hoarse... If politics was his religion and Marx his god, if literature was his passion and Shakespeare his prince among writers, cricket was his beloved activity... Sometimes he came for the weekend to our cottage in Sussex and turned out for the local team. He was a demon bowler, and a powerful if erratic batsman. The village loved him, referring to him affectionately as 'the black bastard'. In Sussex politics were forgotten... Had he not been a revolutionary thinker, what a wonderful capitalist he would have made!

James's concern with the struggle for freedom of Africans, fuelled by the Abyssinian crisis of 1936, led to close collaboration with the International African Service Bureau, whose members included Jomo Kenyatta. Its

founder was George Padmore, whom James had known since childhood and was later to introduce to Nkrumah (writing in a letter to Padmore in 1948: "... this young man [Nkrumah] is coming to you... do what you can for him because he is determined to throw the Europeans out of Africa"). In 1938 a lecture tour took James to the USA. There he remained for 15 years. Pioneering the idea of an autonomous black movement that would not be subordinate to the socialist union movements, he had discussions with Trotsky on the issue. He also founded a democratic revolutionary socialist tendency that gradually elaborated an independent Marxism, breaking with its Trotskyist back-ground. In 1963 James was interned on Ellis Island, as an undesirable alien, during which time he wrote a critical study of Herman Melville, *Melville, Renegades and Casanovys*. The next year he was deported to England.

Before the second world war he had been among the few who not only foresaw but worked for the independence of Africa, and as the results of the struggle for colonial emancipation began to show, he strengthened his links with the Pan-Africanist movement, and with Nkrumah (who recalled in his autobiography that it was through James that he learned "how an under-ground movement worked"). *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (1977) chronicles the events that led up to and ensued from Ghana becoming the first African country to win independence in 1947.

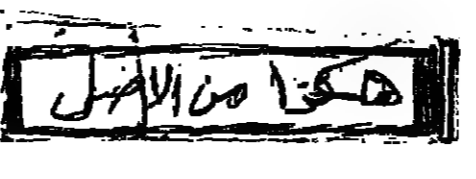
Returning to Trinidad in 1958, he became Secretary of the Federal Labour Party, governing party of the embryonic West Indies Federation, and worked with Dr Eric Williams (his one-time pupil) in the People's National Movement, editing its paper, the Nation, and waging vigorous campaigns including one to have a black man appointed

captain of the West Indies. His association with Williams ended in political disagreement and James returned to England in 1962, a few days before independence. In 1968 he was presented with Trinidad and Tobago's highest award, the Trinity Cross. Perhaps the key to the cyclical nature of James's appeal is that new generations can learn from his insights, as have many of the great history-makers of the century with whom he had been associated, a roll-call that includes Trotsky, Garvey, Nkrumah, Kanyatta, Césaire, Martin Luther King and Walter Rodney. He was above all a teacher: a teacher who learned, and a learner who taught - a combination that made for his distinctive philosophical attitude toward the world, a unique synthesis of theory and practice, that embraced with equal ease Picasso and W.G. Grace, Shakespeare and the calypsonian Mighty Sparrow, the Greek Olympians and Hegel, Tom Morrison and Michelangelo. Integral to his conception of the world was the idea that ordinary people can shape their own lives, create their own destinies.

C.L.R. James once wrote about the cricketer Garfield Sobers: "All geniuses are merely men who carry to an extreme definitive characteristics of the unit of civilisation to which they belong and the special act or function which they express or practise. Therefore to misunderstand Sobers is to misunderstand the West Indies."

As his fellow Trinidadian writer Earl Lovelace wrote at the time of C.L.R.'s death: "He drew from every age and community heroes whose activities and achievements he employed to bury a lie or expose a truth that would liberate people from the ignorance, bigotry and short-sightedness which they brought to bear on their own as much as on other peoples' cultures."

Margaret Busby was co-founder of Allison & Busby. She is the editor of *Daughters of Africa: An International Anthology of Words and Writing by Women of African Descent*, and is working on a book on the migrations of her own family. Her abridgement of James's *Beyond a Boundary*, read by Trevor McDonald, will be on Radio 4 from August 26. James titles in print: *American Civilization* (Blackwell); *Beyond a Boundary* (Serpent's Tail); *The Black Jacobins*; *Toussaint L'Ouverture* and the San Domingo Revolution (Allison & Busby, 1980); *The C.L.R. James Reader* (Blackwell); *Special Delivery: The Letters of C.L.R. James to Constance Webb* (Blackwell).



Michel Debré

All for France

MICHEL DEBRÉ, who has died aged 84, will not be forgotten in the history of modern France. It was he who, in 1945, created the Ecole Nationale d'Administration, thus providing France with its governing class. As Minister for Justice in 1958, he was entrusted by De Gaulle with the task of devising a new constitution. From January 8, 1959 until April 14, 1962 he was the first prime minister of the Fifth Republic. "You have made the constitution; it's for you now to make it work," was how the General put it, and Debré set out to do this with an exuberant determination, tinged perhaps with a certain apprehension. A man of great energy, he despised those who did not have a taste for hard work (he explained the failure of a statesman such as Georges Bidault by his reluctance to be active). Equipped with a clear and analytical mind, he approached problems in terms of administration and structure. His ideas were always organised. But he could be violent. And for most of his active life he was passionately attached to the cause of General de Gaulle. Even here he was anxious to demonstrate that his loyalty did not mean that he was "l'homme de Général". He wrote to De Gaulle frequently on political matters ("what is

Debré complaining about now?" the General would sigh, as yet another note dropped on his desk); he did not hesitate to tell the General when he thought he was wrong. In 1968 for example, he complained if he thought he was not being adequately consulted; and after De Gaulle's resignation he did not choose to follow him into a melancholy retirement but was Minister for Defence under Pompidou's presidency from 1969 to 1972. Debré's grandparents came from Alsace and Lorraine, and both families had rabbinical origins. His father, Professor Robert Debré, was France's leading paediatrician and known throughout the world. Relations between father and son were always close, never more so than in 1943, when they were both separately on the run from the Gestapo and they passed each other on the Boulevard Saint-Michel, neither giving any visible signs of recognition. Educated as a lawyer, and a member of the Conseil d'Etat, Debré was soon attracted to politics and when he contributed to a paper on the kind of Resistance which people wanted, he met Paul Reynaud. When Reynaud became Minister for Finance, Debré joined his private office and wrote some of the decree laws that marked the work of the pre-war government. On the outbreak of war he joined the army, was captured



and then escaped. After spending some time in Morocco he returned to Paris and worked with the group Ceux De La Résistance, where he planned the future of post-war France. With the Liberation he was appointed Commissaire de la République for the region of Algiers and it was there that he met General De Gaulle for the first time. "Bonjour Monsieur Jacques," was the General's greeting, using his Resistance

name. He was recalled to Paris in 1945 with the special task of reforming the civil service, and it was then that he created the Ecole Nationale d'Administration and appointed one of his companions from the Resistance, Bourdillon de Fontenay, as its first director. When De Gaulle resigned in January 1946, Debré was one of the first to plead with him to return to the political arena with his own party. When the

Rally of the French People was formed, Debré worked out its constitutional programme which he called organising revolution by law. As senator for the Indre-et-Loire département he became one of the most resolute of the party's supporters, and when their electoral prospects waned his attitude lost none of its vehemence. He was a strong opponent of the founding of the European

Defence Community in 1963, claiming it was one of the two betrayals of France that he had known, the other being the treason of collaboration after the defeat of 1940. Naturally, he supported the cause of keeping Algeria French but when the crisis of May 1958 blew up he was ill with sciatica and unable to play an important role in the movement that brought De Gaulle back to power. As prime minister he inaugu-

rated a series of economic and social reforms, the most famous of which concerned the new plans for the economy and an agreement on state subsidies for independent (usually Catholic) schools. But the biggest problem was that of Algeria. The process by which De Gaulle proceeded from investing in the future of French Algeria to organising its independence was one that Debré

"Burned out, worn out, but still burning" Debré inspects a guard of honour on a visit to London in 1972. PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER JONES

followed with reluctance. More than once he considered resigning (his father always advised him to stay). However he was always careful to say that Algeria was only one of the difficulties that existed between him and the General. He acted rigorously against both the settlers and the generals when they attempted to revolt against Paris. What counted for him was a unified Gaullist France. It was this vision that he was fading during the 1970s. He therefore stood as a Gaullist candidate in the presidential elections of 1981. But he learned one of the lessons of the Fifth Republic. Every success is attributed to the president; every failure to his prime minister. Hence Debré won a derisory 1.65 per cent of the vote on the first ballot. And so he too failed. But he once described himself, in the words of Berlioz, as "burned out and worn out, but still burning". And so it was through a long and distressing illness. He wrote several books including three volumes of memoirs and his collected conversations with French statesmen. He is survived by four sons, one of whom, Jean-Louis, is the current Minister of the Interior.

Douglas Johnson
Michel Jean-Pierre Debré, born January 15, 1912; died August 2, 1998

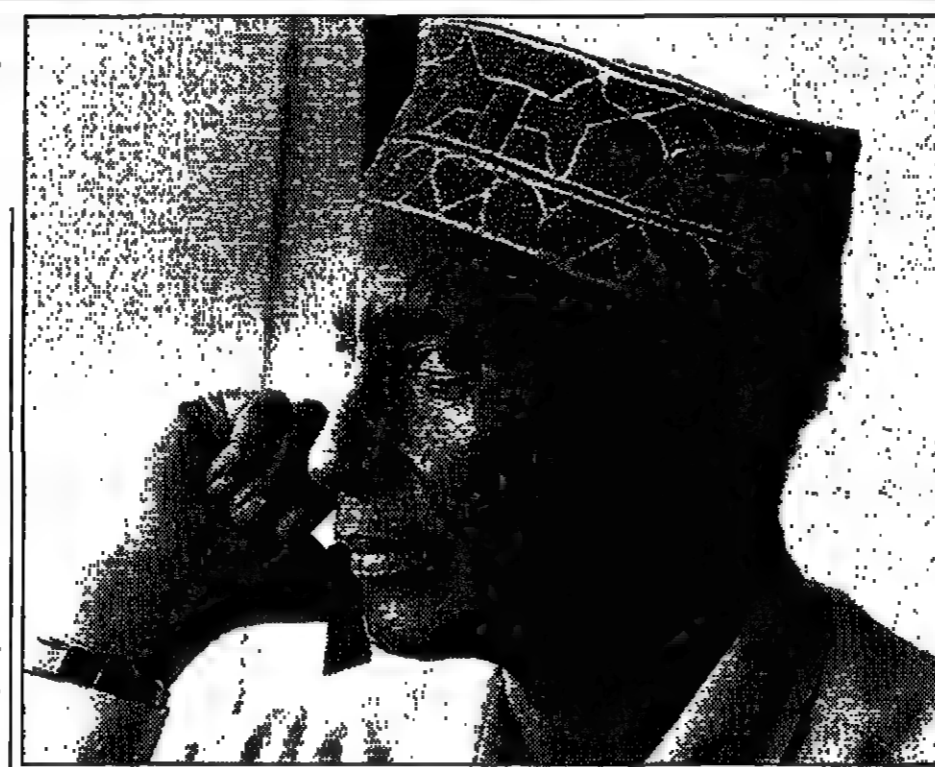
Mohammed Farah Aided

The wily warlord

THE career of the Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aided, who has died aged 89, apparently of a heart attack, after being badly wounded in militia fighting, was nurtured in the Horn of Africa in the latter days of the Cold War — with guns as chips — and flourished as his country was torn apart by those weapons in the 1990s. His times came with the downfall of the Somali dictator Mohammed Siad Barre in January 1991. Aided was the most famous of the warlords who have struggled for supremacy in that country's six-year civil war. And his legacy haunts United States foreign policy to this day. The Gulf War may have been a brief triumph. Mogadishu was a lasting disaster. Aided attended an Italian military academy in the mid-1960s; police training in Rome followed, and by 1968 he was back in Somalia as Mogadishu's chief of police. In 1969 the country won its independence. In 1963 Aided took a three year course at the Soviet War Strategic Academy. In 1968 Somalia began its long slide into chaos. The Somali Republic was rent by

fragmentation and tribalism which climaxed with the seizure of power by Siad Barre. It was a time when the rhetoric of Soviet-style modernisation was still in vogue. Thus the country swung towards the Soviet sphere of influence, and thus did the country become the Somali Democratic Republic, and thus did Siad Barre's mechanism of control become the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party. And thus did Aided briefly become the dictator's intelligence boss, but it was an uneasy relationship. With the Somali invasion of Ethiopia in 1977 the Soviet link snapped — Moscow had aimed his money, influence and weapons towards Ethiopia — and by 1980, Siad Barre had signed a defence agreement with the United States. During that period Aided was in a Somali jail but in 1984 Siad Barre released him and soon he embarked on a diplomatic career, as ambassador to Turkey and India. In 1989 Siad Barre recalled him from New Delhi but Aided chose Italian exile, where he and other dissidents from his Hawiyi clan formed the United Somali Congress; Aided was the chairman. By then military catastrophe, the end of the Cold War, a

refugee crisis and famine were rocking Siad Barre's regime. Coming out of Ethiopia, the USC fought its way (with the help of the northern guerrilla opposition) to Mogadishu and eventually Siad Barre was chased out of the capital in 1991. But troops loyal to the dictator fought on, and power struggles between other factions, and within the USC and the Hawiyi clan — between Aided and his arch rival Ali Mahdi — erupted. Somalia, rich with Cold War guns, turned into a wasteland. In 1992 the United Nations organised a brief ceasefire. During that year, despite blocking tactics by Aided and the raging war, his presence did the humanitarian crisis. But it was in December 1992, with the US-led "Operation Restore Hope" that Aided's name featured in the international news pages. By the end of that month, 30,000 US and UN troops from 31 other countries had moved into Somalia. Reconciliation talks were promoted, the Americans pressed flesh with Aided. He said he would disarm but didn't. In June 1993 Aided's USC forces ambushed 23 Pakistani soldiers. The UN forces declared him an



Clan chief... Mohammed Aided in Mogadishu, after his forces took control in 1991

outlaw. But seemingly indomitable violence by UN forces increased friction. One night in early October some 200 Somalis, 18 US Rangers and one Malaysian soldier were killed in a US-led attack on Aided's supporters. Subsequent demands for Aided's arrest were dropped. Seven months later, US forces withdrew from Somalia. In 1996 other countries had moved into Somalia. Reconciliation talks were promoted, the Americans pressed flesh with Aided. He said he would disarm but didn't. In June 1993 Aided's USC forces ambushed 23 Pakistani soldiers. The UN forces declared him an

lapse, regional and clan conflict and the catastrophic after-effects of East-West rivalry on the southern hemisphere. Mohammed Farah Aided (Hawiyi), warlord, born December 15, 1909; died August 1, 1998

Weekend birthdays

Look, now that Steven Berkoff is 69 today, shall we all agree that he's an institution? That's probably more offensive to him than a dismissive review or baiting interview: but in Britain, you cannot be so powerfully different, so much the outsider, for 30 extremely odd years without in the end being seen as permanent, even comforting. His wrath, ire and overweeningness are now old reliable. And anyway, this year he's mortgaged his flat to back his tenure of the weary Mervyn Theatre — "It's the flat, we won't die". Berkoff has intelligence — those astonishing Kates productions and physical intelligence, too, the neck-down acting so rare in Britain; yet no knack for dealing with a world which wants rather less than he is determined to give it. Hence the savage satirical-in-the-Swissese quality. As he says, he didn't have the education, so the only way out for the ego and the energy was either Kray-type crime or the arts. But does he have the eccentricity for a Brit institution? Well, he keeps a ping-pong table in the rehearsal room. "Very important for the concentration, ping-pong."



Baroness (P D) James, crime novelist, 76; Anthony Saxton, author and journalist, 70; Martin Sheen, actor, 66; Sue Shipman, director, London TSB Council, 47; Terry Wogan, broadcaster, 68.

Tomorrow's birthdays: Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, 86; Georgina Hale, actress, 53; Martin Jarvis, actor, 65; Simon Preston, organiser, 52; Mary (Decker) Slaney, athlete, 33; Peter Squires, rugby player, 48; Frances Stewart, economist, 55.

Death Notices

Peter Michael, socialist and noted T-bury doctor, anti-nuclear activist, died suddenly on 28th July. He leaves a beloved wife, Joan, and children Michael, Daniel, James and Elizabeth. He will be forever in our hearts. Family flowers only, please. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Peter Michael Trust, 15 Scotland Street, London EC1A 3JH. Tel: 020 7403 1234. August 1, 1998.

Births

FRANÇOISE, Tracy and Stephen, a lovely daughter Isabelle, born in Wellington, New Zealand on 28th July. Mother and baby lovely.

Peter Dobereiner



Peter Dobereiner... gifted with a love of golf

PETER DOBEREINER, who has died aged 75, was golf correspondent for both the Guardian and the Observer over three decades. One of the most erudite of men, he was also one of the most gifted golf writers and possessed a sense of humour which rarely failed to raise a chuckle in his readers. In later life he lived in Bratts Bottom, Kent, a home he bought partially because of its name. Dobereiner was a convivial soul, never happier than when discussing any of his many non-golfing interests over a

bottle of good claret. He did not come from a privileged background, growing up in a poor district of New York before, by way of contrast, coming to this country to read Law at Oxford. During the second world war he was involved in training Britain's Fleet Air Arm, in Pensacola, Florida, before moving to India after the war. He was ostensibly employed on a tea plantation, though it was typical that he returned to this country with an extensive knowledge of the art of distilling spirits. Tea played another, quite

unexpected part in Dobereiner's life when, in 1968, he arrived in Boston to find he had unwittingly fermented a future. He had written a piece for the American magazine Golf Digest about the founding of the Brookline club just outside the city, the venue for that year's US Open. He had said that the English foreman had been forced to remind his largely Irish labour force that when laying the turf it was "green side up, boys". The Mayor of Boston did not see the joke and Dobereiner had to try to explain himself to an uncomprehending television interviewer and a Boston storm-in-a-teacup-party fol-

lowed as copies of the article were thrown into the harbour. Through it all, Dobereiner, scarcely able to believe it, retained the ghost of a smile. Before he turned to writing about golf, Dobereiner had worked as a scriptwriter for That Was The Week That Was, working with David Frost and receiving an award for his efforts. That award, along with other honours such as a medal from the King of Morocco for promoting "goodwill, tourism and international understanding through golf" were hung on a wall in his home, in, of course, the smallest room. Entertainer though he was,

Dobereiner was respected throughout the golf world, not just for his journalism but also for his golf course designs which he turned to on retirement. The first, in Portugal, was built according to doodles on the back of an envelope drawn by Sir Henry Cotton. Dobereiner received no fee for his work; he was merely honouring the maestro. Michael Bonalack, secretary of the Royal and Ancient golf club praised Dobereiner's writing: "He was always the man you wanted to read. He had great flair, but what came through most of all was his tremendous love for the game." His last editor, Jerry

Tards, of Golf Digest, said: "We thought of him as a giant, a literary giant. He brought great heart and humour to the game, he taught us self-deprecation, how to laugh at ourselves. He always punctured the balloon. He had great insight and while sometimes his arguments seemed silly, a few years later we realised he had been right all the time." He leaves a wife and four children. David Davies
Peter Arthur Bertram Dobereiner, journalist, born November 3, 1925; died August 2, 1998

Face to Faith

Miracles in the mundane

John Fox

ONCE a Catholic always a Catholic it's said. Fortunately it's not true. When I was seven, my stepfather died of tuberculosis just before her 21st birthday. Before her funeral I was whisked away by an auntie. Every night for a year after that I cried, praying in a tent of bedclothes. I knew Jesus performed miracles, and I was good she would come back. Just over a decade later, as a national service officer in the Royal West African Frontier Force in Ghana, I was still going to Roman Catholic communion. The White Fathers, as they called themselves, lived simply if comfortably, but to my late adolescent perception they seemed to be unaware of the old and the poor with open sores and unsym-

pathetic to the many existing West African religions. To a European schoolboy, life was suddenly cheap. Nicely I collected ammunition boxes for burying the bodies of the dead babies or the still births that were frequent in the families of my 30-strong platoon of soldiers. At 20 I stopped going to Mass. Now I'm 67. It is frequently said that we live in "a post-religious age," but I never quite know what to say when people ask me if I am religious. I think I am. Although I have no wish ever again to be associated with any religious institution, Religion seems to cause violence. Maybe we would be better off without it altogether. If so, what other patterns would we need to use to prevent us becoming dizzy when contemplating the void? For 30 years as a theatre director of large scale, site specific celebratory events involving thousands of participants

in fire shows, carnivals and lantern processions, I am looking at rites of passage. Many spectators sport can be distractions, as addictive and time-consuming as any religion or drug. It's easy to be drawn to large scale entertainments, commissioned by the arts market, when instead we could be improving those crossroad ceremonies such as namings, betrothals or funerals, where we need to shout and share our humanity with wider congregations. In English culture many of these necessary ceremonies have become poor, moribund, hypocritical, irrelevant and too expensive. We have started with death. After experiencing many conveyor belt type funerals, I've written a practical manual docu-menting how much control and choice we can have over such rites, once we free ourselves from taboos and antiquated traditions. The book draws on powerful anecdotal

and personal examples from many correspondents. It suggests ritual sequences, aesthetic artefacts (such as painted coffins, handmade urns, bereavement lanterns, papercuts and wooden shrouds), and alternative burial sites. It puts funerary rites into an appropriate historical and legal context. It questions the universal practices of embalming with formaldehyde and burial in over-priced chipboard coffins. The taboo of death is maintained to a considerable extent by professional undertakers and priests. Facing up to our own deaths, and designing our own funeral in consultation with our friends and family is a radical, leaving home, stopping work (either through choice or redundancy) changing jobs, changing status, reaching 50, moving or building a house, divorcing — as well as in the traditional areas of birth, baptism, coming of age, marrying or dying, we could all benefit from considered declarations of our position with a sympathetic group.

The question for a fragmented society is not whether we need rites of passage ceremonies, but rather what form should they take and who should provide them? With this in mind we are constructing a permanent building for holding new ceremonies. We are now at the design stage. We plan to re-furbish a training centre for the "celebratory arts" where local people and some "specialist celebrants" may learn to facili-

ate ceremonies for themselves and others. The experience of writing our manual was humbling. Once we stopped assuming religion had to be the stuff of detritus and pieties, institutions and retributions, and realised the need to reclaim a sense of the sacred to inform secular rites, we came to understand that many of our neighbours

have their own "religious" sense of the inexplicable. Using intuition, many people experience great wonder, not just when their children are born and they fall in love. Nor just when faced with strange coincidences and before "awesome nature" but also in everyday surprises and simple communication with friends.

For many of us, the daily grind, ambition, our careers, the news, the welter of the trivial, obscures the central focus. But once removed from this clutter, many of us share a sense of the miraculous. John Fox is a founder of Welfare State International and has just published, with Sue Gill, The Dead Good Funerals Book

Doonesbury



BY GARRY TRUDEAU

MoneyGuardian

Home repossessions may be down, but as the market picks up lenders seem increasingly inclined to take mortgagors in arrears to court

Still jobless, homeless and in debt

Rachel Baird

ALTHOUGH lenders claim the number of homes repossessed has stabilised — 1,100 fewer in the first half of this year than a year ago — almost 1,000 homeowners are still losing their homes each week. Equally worrying is the claim by the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux that "there are increasing signs of lenders taking court action within weeks rather than months".

Announcing this week's figures, which showed that 24,100 homes were repossessed in the first half of this year, Adrian Coles, the director general of the Council of Mortgage Lenders, rebutted claims that lenders had begun to increase their possession activity in response to a rising housing market. He argued that borrowers should be "reassured" by both the fall in repossessions and the 10 per cent reduction in mortgage arrears. But Mr Coles admitted that "a backlog of problems still remain", adding that there were also "concerns" over the future impact of last year's cutbacks in the income support safety net for unemployed borrowers, particularly at a time of "greater employment uncertainty".

Unemployment is the largest single cause of mortgage arrears, according to a quarterly survey of 3,000 people counselled by mortgage advice provider independent Counselling Services.

Redundancy pushed James Smith, one of those recently repossessed, into arrears with his mortgage. He left the Newcastle upon Tyne home where he lived for eight years on 11 June 1996, one day before his eviction under a repossession order obtained by mortgage lender Hill Samuel Bank.

He had not worked since January, when he was diag-

What to do in a crisis

NICK Pearson, manager of the CAB's London Money Advice Support Unit, advises people with mortgage difficulties to:

- Contact your lender as soon as possible and explain the problem.
- Prioritise your mortgage repayments (and repayments of other loans secured on your home) above all your other debts.
- Write down what you owe to all your creditors, what you need to spend and what your income is. Then offer reduced repayments to creditors whose loans are not secured on your home.
- If you can't afford your full mortgage repayments, work out what you can afford and tell your lender. If possible, support what you say with details of your in-

come, other debts and spending.

- Never ignore documents about your mortgage from your lender or from a court. If you don't understand them, contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau (details in the local telephone directory).
- The Council Of Mortgage Lenders stresses the importance of contacting your lender immediately about problems. It warns people not to take out further loans in order to pay their regular mortgage payments, as this will make a debt problem worse. The CML has a leaflet about help available if you are in difficulty.

Assistance With Mortgage Repayments, from Council of Mortgage Lenders, 3 Savile Row, London W1X 1AF.

Shields county court in April, it emerged that the lawyer representing Hill Samuel did not realise Mr Smith was on invalidity benefit (because of his arthritis). The judge ordered that Mr Smith should pay a set amount to Hill Samuel each month, but it was less than what was due under his mortgage agreement.

Hill Samuel appealed against this to Newcastle Crown Court. The Crown Court judge granted the bank a repossession order, but only because the law forced him to, Mr Smith and his CAB adviser argue. During the fight for his home he suffered from sleepless nights, severe headaches, weight loss and an inability to socialise properly. He said his impression was that lenders were not bothered about their actions' effects on people's lives. Banks should "treat people as human beings, and not as names and numbers", he said.

However, Hill Samuel refused to deal with the CAB on the grounds that the mortgage was in the joint names of Mr Smith and his wife (despite their separation). Under the Data Protection Act, said the bank, it needed Mrs Smith's permission to talk to the CAB.

For the same reason, Hill Samuel could not discuss Mr Smith's case with Money Guardian. However, the bank said: "Eviction is only considered as a last resort, when customers have missed many payments and are in arrears by a substantial number of months." It did accept reduced mortgage payments, "sometimes for lengthy periods".



Evicted... James Smith's circumstances had no impact on his case PHOTOGRAPH: WILL WALKER

Why there can be no surrender on endowment front

Rachel Baird

STRAPPED for cash borrowers who fall into arrears frequently surrender their endowment policies as well. Overall, more than two-thirds of people with an endowment policy surrender it early, despite the consensus that surrendering should be a last resort. Part of the problem is that people are not aware of the alternatives which, together with ceasing to make payments to the endowment provider, involves taking whatever you have paid into the policy, minus commission and other charges.

It can give you less than you have paid into an endowment — or even nothing at all. Charges tend to be heaviest at the start of an endowment policy and you would have to hold a policy for seven years before it was worth more than the premiums paid in, according to the Consumers' Association Which? magazine. If you have an endowment mortgage, then surrendering the endowment policy will mean that you switch to a repayment mortgage and have to pay back the capital you borrowed as well as interest on the loan.

Even after seven years, it is rarely a good idea to surrender. One option is selling your endowment, though a traded endowment market maker. They can help people make around 10 per cent more than they would if they surrendered.

There are also auctions of life policies, which produce around 20 per cent above surrender value, and "trawlers" people who search the market to find the best deal for your policy. But not all policies are tradeable — they must be with-profits endowments, usually need a surrender

value of at least £1,500, and to have been going for seven years.

The Association of Policy Market Makers has free leaflets for people buying or selling an endowment and can arrange for three independent valuations of a policy. Life companies (which provide the endowment part of an endowment mortgage) and building societies do not do enough to alert people to alternatives to surrender, argues Association chairman David Beale. He wants life companies to tell people who get quotations about how much they would get if they surrendered. He lists Norwich Union, General Accident Life, Friends Provident, Pearl, Scottish Provident, Commercial Union and Clerical Medical and Refuge as companies that do mention the second-hand endowment market to people

who inquire about surrendering. The Association of British Insurers also has a leaflet, Life Insurance Surrender Values, which outlines the alternatives to surrender.

For people who need money, partially surrendering an endowment gives them some of the money they have paid into the policy while continuing to pay premiums. This, obviously, produces a smaller lump sum when the policy matures.

Another alternative to surrendering, "paying up" a policy, allows you to stop paying premiums while leaving what you have already paid invested with the life company. Your money should grow, but not by as much as it would if you continued paying premiums.

If you are thinking of surrendering an endowment but want to know more about the alternatives, ask your endowment provider. Association of Policy Market Makers, tel 0171 739 3949.

It should be a last resort but most people are not sufficiently aware of alternatives

Lenders build on house price recovery

Richard Miles

CASHBACKS in the mortgage market may soon disappear as Abbey National, the UK's second-largest lender, said this week that it was reducing payments for some borrowers.

The move comes amid growing evidence that the housing market is well on its way to recovery. Latest figures from Halifax show that house prices rose by 0.5 per cent during July.

From early September, home owners wanting to remortgage with Abbey National using its standard

variable 6.99 per cent home loan will qualify for a cashback of just 2 per cent if the loan is less than 75 per cent of their property's value, against a current level of 5 per cent. Those remortgaging with loans of between 75 per cent and 85 per cent will be eligible for a mere 1 per cent. But the cashback for new borrowers remains 5 per cent.

The Chelsea Building Society has reduced to 14 per cent the discount offered on its two-year discount plus 2 per cent cashback mortgage. The new rate is 5.49 per cent. NatWest has introduced the first mainstream mortgage linked to the Base Rate which guarantees a rate equivalent

to 1 per cent above its base rate, currently 5.75 per cent, for the full term of the loan. However, this is available only to new customers and through its telephone-based direct mortgage service.

NatWest has unveiled a series of discounts for the first three years of a loan, starting at 2.2 per cent on a 75 per cent loan, falling to 1.8 per cent for a 95 per cent mortgage. But borrowers who opt for the discount must tie themselves into the bank's variable rate until the end of January 2003. It also has a couple of two-year fixes, either 7.29 per cent with no ties-in or 4.79 per cent with a tie-in to NatWest's variable rate for the following five

years. First Direct has trimmed its variable rate to 6.49 per cent, undercutting most of its high street rivals. The new rate is available to both new and existing customers.

Yorkshire Bank has pared back its variable rate to 6.99 per cent from 7.25 per cent, while direct provider First-Mortgage claims the lowest variable rate at 5.95 per cent. This comes with no redemption penalties or fees.

Norwich & Peterborough has overhauled its mortgage range though its variable rate remains unchanged at 6.74 per cent. The first of the new loans is a 4 per cent discount until October 1 next year or a 4 per

cent cashback. Customers can also opt for a 2 per cent discount until the same date, or 2 per cent cashback.

First-time buyers will get a 1.6 per cent discount for three years from Birmingham Midshires, a current rate of 5.39 per cent. Borrowers get a £200 cashback plus a refunded valuation fee. A sliding scale of discounts is available on Skipton's 8.84 per cent variable rate. It is offering 3 per cent in their first year, 2 per cent in the second and down to 1 per cent in the third year. The loan comes with free unemployment cover.

Money Guardian is edited by Margaret Hughes

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Sears hounded into selling a soft Puppy

The retail empire's collapse could lead to the loss of up to 1,000 jobs, reports LISA BUCKINGHAM

SEARS, the hard-pressed retail group, yesterday sold its Hush Puppy footwear business... The retailer — whose high-street outlets include Selfridges and Richards — also managed to get rid of a small number of the unwanted shoe shops which had been sold to Facia but which have come back to haunt it following the latter's collapse.

The Hush Puppy business, which a recent high-profile advertising campaign failed to rescue from its famous if somewhat dowdy bassett-hound image, is being sold for £19.2 million to Stylo Barrett, the Yorkshire shoe group run by the Ziff family. Meanwhile, in a deal that will bring in £3.5 million, the wholesale Hush Puppy operation is being sold to the Hush Puppy brand-name owner, Wolvete World Wide.

For new foggies with a taste for the old-fashioned, Sears has, however, secured a deal by which the branded shoes will continue to be supplied to its department store concessions and Shoe City stores. The retail and wholesale sell-offs will result in a profit of only £250,000. But the other deal, announced yesterday, involves Sears paying to have unwanted shops taken off its hands. The company said it was selling Stylo 61 outlets which are currently operating as Saxone, Freeman Hardy Willis and Trueform. The Yorkshire group will pay Facia — which is in administration following the collapse of Stephen Hinchliffe's retail empire — about £5.9 million for the Saxone name and stock. But Sears will give Stylo a so-called "reverse premium" of £2.75 million to take the shops. Liam Strong, Sears' chief executive, tried to put a gloss on the moves, saying they were the "final building block" in the group's refocusing strategy.

The disposals leave Sears with 260 shops "sold" to Facia but which have come back on to its books because of the unsatisfactory terms of the disposal. Although estate agents Healy & Baker are searching for buyers for the rest, none is likely to be sold without a sweetener from Sears. Analysts suspect that most will be shut down, with the loss of up to 1,000 jobs. Shares in Sears sank a further 1 1/2 to 88p yesterday — 2p below the level four years ago. The only real comfort Mr Strong could offer was that yesterday's deal suggested the £25 million provision already booked against the Facia catastrophe had proved adequate.



Saturday Notebook

Continental on Target



Edited by Mark Milner

THREE months ago, or thereabouts, the Bank of England warned that whether or not the UK signed up, the City's financial markets needed to start planning for the single currency. Though the paper, written by John Townsend, the Bank's deputy director for market operations, could hardly be described as an alarm call, it did have an underlying note of urgency. With good reason. The French financial establishment showed why this week. From a series of reports it is clear that the French are planning to make sure that when the switch to the single currency — the euro — comes, they will be prepared to do business in the new currency from January 4, 1999 — the first trading day after the scheduled date for the irrevocable locking of exchange rates laid down in the Maastricht treaty. French thinking is clear. "All financial markets will switch rapidly to the euro from the beginning of 1999, paved the way by the implementation of a single monetary policy in euros and the conversion of public debt into the euro," according to Bank of France deputy governor Herve Hanoun.

The French financial system is aiming to have its euro strategy in place by later this year but already it is coming up with some practical proposals. French ministers and officials have always taken the line that those investors holding securities denominated in ecus (European currency units) will be able to swap them on a one-for-one basis for the euro as soon as the latter is introduced. Now French financial institutions are calling on the French treasury to start issuing more government debt in ecus. The French authorities have long tried to encourage the growth of eco-denominated markets in Paris, rather in the way the Bank of England has done in London. The aim is clear. The bigger the French-based market in ecus becomes, the bigger will be Paris's share of the euro-denominated markets when European monetary union takes place.

France seems to be seeking to exploit a possible competitive advantage for Paris over London if the pound opts out of the single currency. One piece of financial infrastructure being worked on by the European Monetary Institute — the European Union's putative central bank — is a concept called Target or, to give it its full title, Trans-European Automated Real Time Gross Settlement Express Transfer System. Target will be a Europe-wide system capable of the same day settlement of cross-border obligations between financial institutions. But as a May paper from an EMI working party noted, "The main objective of the Target system will be to serve the needs of the single monetary policy in Stage Three (of monetary union)." That raises the question about access to Target. Should countries which do not sign up for the single currency have the same access as those

which have. And what about those countries — such as Switzerland — which are not members of the European Union? France and Germany are understood to be arguing that those who do not sign up for monetary union should have only limited access to the system. They argue that if the European central bank imposes minimum reserve requirements (obligatory deposits with the central bank) on banks within the single currency area — as is the case in Germany at present, for example — then banks outside the single currency bloc which do not have to meet minimum reserve requirements will have a comparative advantage if they are allowed equal access to Target. On the other hand, as Target will be the mechanism by which the ECB controls the supply of euros to the financial markets, any restrictions on access for outsiders could make it more difficult for their financial institutions to borrow euros for trading — hitting London's ability to develop euro markets. Much of the technical detail about how Target will operate has still to be worked out. Much of the discussion will take place among central bank technicians meeting under the auspices of the EMI. But as its designers seek to build a safe and secure Europe-wide system of payments settlement at least part of the discussions will be influenced by national rivalries over Europe's financial business.

Issue of risk

THE Alternative Investment Market reached a notable landmark yesterday when its membership roll reached the 300 mark. Its capitalisation stands at a very handy £4 billion. AIM's success, in little more than a year, is to be applauded but an accident-free future of seamless growth in membership and share values should not be taken for granted. At one point, earlier in the summer, it seemed as though any company which could put together a press release was coming to the market. Nor did there seem to be any lack of shareholder appetite for such firms — no matter what they did or who the management was.

The last thing that AIM needs is a serious dilution of the quality of its list, undermining the market's biggest achievement in providing small and growing firms with an invaluable source of capital. The speed at which the market itself has grown and the enthusiasm with which investors — both private and institutional — have flocked to new issues, were inevitably going to cool off. After such heady progress a market correction — to use the jargon for a sharp fall in prices — cannot be ruled out. In the last few weeks a welcome caution appears to have emerged. A number of new issues have been pulled altogether, while others have been recalled and priced more realistically. Investors can play their part too in the new realism. Investing in companies quoted on AIM is always going to be more risky than buying shares in the likes of GEC or Marks & Spencer. All the more reason, then, to give the prospectus careful inspection before snapping up an AIM issue. Regular reviews of any holdings would not go amiss either.

Big Bang 2 on right course

Paul Murphy
THE Stock Exchange confirmed yesterday that it is on course to launch a new trading system for the London stock market — dubbed Big Bang II — next summer. After publishing the results of its second round of consultation with member broking firms, big investors and representatives of smaller shareholders, it is planning to publish a "white paper" of the new service this autumn.

around the time the City marks the tenth anniversary of the original Big Bang. Brokers and institutions will then have nine months to prepare for market participants posting orders to buy and sell shares in the FTSE 100 top companies on an electronic "order book". This replaces the quote-driven system, where marketmaking firms alone advertise at what prices they are willing to buy or sell a particular share. The new system is likely to be switched on over the August bank holiday weekend next summer.

The exchange yesterday claimed "wide market support" for its proposals, which had to be reworked after the acrimonious departure of former chief executive Michael Lawrence last autumn. Leading stockbroking firms had accused Mr Lawrence of rushing through the reforms, intended to bring City more into line with other big financial centres. Around 100 brokers and investors responded to the exchange's request for comments on how the order-driven system will operate. The responses bore the scars

of last year's boardroom row at the exchange, with some of the biggest marketmakers still aggrieved at the move away from quote-driven trading. The investment banking arm of Barclays, BZW, stated: "We believe the current proposals will require a number of changes if they are to advance the interests not only of the London Stock Exchange but the users of the market." Merrill Lynch, the US investment bank which last year took over London's largest marketmaking firm, Smith New Court, remains worried

that London's reputation, as a market where risk capital is freely available, remains at risk itself. "Central to our acceptance of the idea of an order matching facility on the LSE was the conviction that the culture of capital commitment, which has been critical to London's pre-eminence, should not be sacrificed. Without it, liquidity may be so damaged that competing centres will reap the benefits which London may never be able to retrieve," Merrill stated. "The Americans argue that the Exchange has much work

to do in re-balancing the various obligations, with market-makers currently having to provide constant prices at which they are prepared to trade, and accompanying privileges such as avoiding tax and being able to borrow stock. "If the privileges under-shoot the obligations, liquidity will be damaged. If liquidity is damaged then the market will be damaged. If the market is damaged the receipts from stamp duty will fall commensurately. This scenario is in nobody's interests," Merrill said.

US jobs data aid markets and Fed

Mark Tran in New York
THE markets heaved a sigh of relief yesterday as the US jobs report for July eased Wall Street fears of an overheating economy and took the pressure off the Federal Reserve to raise rates at its next policy meeting. The unemployment rate edged up 0.1 per cent to 5.4 per cent last month as the economy created 193,000 jobs, just under Wall Street estimates of 200,000. For once, the job figures did not unsettle the markets. Previous jobs reports, where the US economy generated new jobs at a surprisingly rapid rate, upset the markets with the prospect of unsustainable growth. July's jobs figures, together with this week's slew of other economic data, provided further evidence of a slowdown in the economy after it grew a brisk 4.2 per cent annual rate in the second quarter. With the economy losing

momentum, some analysts asserted that the Federal Reserve will be off the hook when it considers interest rates at its policy meeting on August 20. The Fed normally does not raise rates in an election year to avoid political controversy. Some economists, though, did not rule out a modest tightening of 0.25 per cent to 5.50 per cent in the federal funds rate, which banks charge each other for loans. "There are no signs of serious wage inflation, so it's a tough call for the Fed," said Wayne Ayers, chief economist with the Bank of Boston. "But chairman Alan Greenspan believes in pre-emptive action while the numbers are good. He must know we're on a cusp and he may want to take out extra insurance." In another sign of economic slowdown, the Commerce Department said yesterday that consumer spending fell 0.2 per cent in July — the first drop since the winter blizzards kept shoppers at home.

Dealers break from sterling

Richard Thomas Economics Correspondent
DEALERS heading for their holidays sent the pound tumbling on the foreign exchanges yesterday, pouring money into the safe havens of German and Swiss currencies. By the close of trading in London, sterling was down by one and a half pennings to close at DM2.2820. Against the dollar, the pound dipped slightly to close at \$1.5435. Amid fresh fears of the impact of BSE on British industry, traders said the core European currencies looked more attractive. And with a number of market players on holiday next week, analysts said positions were being left in secure berths. David Bloom, foreign exchange expert at brokers HSBC James Capel, said: "There was certainly a holiday effect here, and the market was generally a bit nervous anyway. The remaining

whiff of 'Euro-row' this week probably didn't help the pound either." However, after two days of selling, most market-watchers thought that next week could see some recuperation for sterling. Jeremy Stretch, currency strategist at NatWest Markets, said: "The pound has seen a wave of selling and is still looking shaky, but some of the pressure is likely to recede now." Revelations this week about new research findings on "mad cow disease" led the European Union to warn of a possible delay in the removal of the ban on UK beef. This was seen by many analysts as an excuse to take some profits from sterling, which has been on a steadily rising trend since the original scare. Mr Bloom said the German mark's strength would annoy the authorities, who are trying to talk down the currency to ease the pressure on Germany's hard-pressed manufacturers.

Electra's bid for HMSO preferred

Lisa Buckingham
RUPERT Pennant-Rea, who was drummed out of the Bank of England deputy governorship after revelations of an extramarital affair, will become chairman of HMSO following Electra Fleming's emergence as preferred bidder. The Electra consortium, which is thought to be bidding £70 million for the government's publishing business, is fronted by Mr Pennant-Rea (pictured), who was recently refused a visa for the US because of business connections with Cuba. It has also recruited Robert Thian, the former North West Water chief executive. Electra said yesterday it hoped to complete the deal within a few weeks. A spokeswoman said that, although the consortium would install a chairman and chief executive, it



would retain some of the existing management. Electra's bid topped two other serious contenders — consortia led by NatWest and SI — but will still leave the government about £30 million short of the £100 million it had hoped to raise from the privatisation. It is estimated that the new owners will make redundant up to 1,000 of HMSO's 2,600 staff.

Lloyd's rescue dispute

Lisa Buckingham
CONTROVERSY erupted again at Lloyd's of London yesterday as the auditors, Pannell Kerr Forster, dismissed claims that they were making an 11th-hour attempt to become involved in the market's rescue package, to avoid being sued for £274 million by unhappy investors. The association representing disaffected investors on Dick Hazel's syndicate 190, which suffered huge asbestos-related losses, had claimed that PKF had approached Lloyd's asking to contribute to the £3.2 billion settlement offer.

But the association, and a spokesman for Lloyd's, said this last-minute intervention had been rejected, as copies of the detailed settlement offer had been posted to 34,000 Names earlier in the week. The aggrieved investors on syndicate 190 will receive no specific compensation for their losses, totalling £274 million. Pannell Kerr Forster, despite being a prominent Lloyd's auditor, is not involved in the £115 million contribution to the offer made by other accountability firms. PKF's chairman, Richard Pearson, denied yesterday that his firm had been attempting a last-minute participation in the offer in order to

shield itself against potential litigation. He said PKF was simply "exploring with Lloyd's... their understanding of the reconstruction and renewal document". Mr Pearson said the settlement was supposed to mean that litigation should cease. "When more litigation is suddenly threatened it is a matter of concern, so we'll work exploring." The accountability firm said it had not received a writ from the Names' association and that any claim would be strenuously resisted. The Lloyd's market appeared to be under the impression, however, that PKF had been seeking terms for participation in the settlement.

AIM growth prompts fears

Sarah Whitebloom
THE Alternative Investment Market, which was launched in June last year, yesterday announced the 200th firm had joined the list. But concerns are building over how the £4 billion small firms market is holding up in the face of such rapid growth. It is understood that the Stock Exchange has privately expressed worries that corporate advisers are not adequately policing the AIM firms for which they act as "nominated advisers". Such problems would ring alarm bells at the Exchange since, under AIM's rules, nominated advisers are the

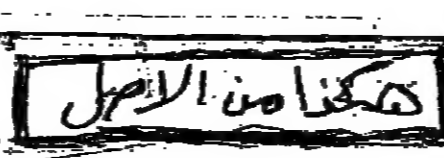
cornerstone of regulation. Any hint that supervision was being neglected would undermine the entire basis of the new market. Because of this the Exchange is believed to have taken immediate, private action and it is still carrying out an annual review of the nominated advisers. Such is the sensitivity of the subject that the Exchange refused to comment yesterday. The sheer number of AIM companies has made proper monitoring difficult for some advisers. But fears over the quality of nominated advisers led regulation arose before the market came about. According to one AIM

specialist: "There's an awful lot of pressure on nominated advisers. They are simply being asked to do too much... the Exchange should do some of the work itself." Michael Chickens, a director of Neill Clerk Capital, the leading nominated adviser with 25 AIM companies on its books, claimed the Exchange has never voiced any concerns to his firm about its work. But he admitted: "There has been a lot more work than we envisaged on day one. But we have set ourselves up to cope with it." Rumours in the City suggest that the Exchange's annual review will see firms publicly reprimanded because of blunders in the past year.

News in brief

- Ronson asks for £10.4m**
Ronson, maker of the Comet and Vardams cigarettes lighters, is asking shareholders for £10.4 million to repay bank debt and put some punch behind a new range of male fashion accessories unveiled last Wednesday. Some of the money will be used to help Ronson to recover from a fire at its Newcastle plant in January that destroyed its main manufacturing and warehousing operation. The blaze meant lost sales in the early part of the year and contributed to the near-£1.5 million drop in half-year profits to £57,000 announced yesterday along with the cash-raising rights issue of new shares.
- Moat float**
Rumours spread yesterday that Queens Moat Houses, the debt-laden hotels group, was planning to float off 25 hotels worth £100 million that it previously said it was going to sell. City critics, however, suggested that a float was unlikely, and would certainly not happen in the near future.
- Queens Moat's debt stands at around £1 billion.**
- Swiss risk**
Union Bank of Switzerland confirmed yesterday that it had begun a review aimed at streamlining its domestic branch network. Reports in the Swiss press have put the number of jobs at risk as between 2,000 and 7,000.
- Homes away**
Further confirmation that the pick-up in housing market is sustained has come from the Nationwide Building Society, whose house price index for July shows a 3.8 per cent increase on a year ago. The society expects activity will continue to improve but warns that this will depend on more second-time buyers coming back into the market.
- Flotations**
We would like to make clear that Therapeutic Antibodies and Allezyme have both successfully completed stock market flotations. In an article in Thursday's Guardian these companies were mistakenly said to have abandoned flotations.

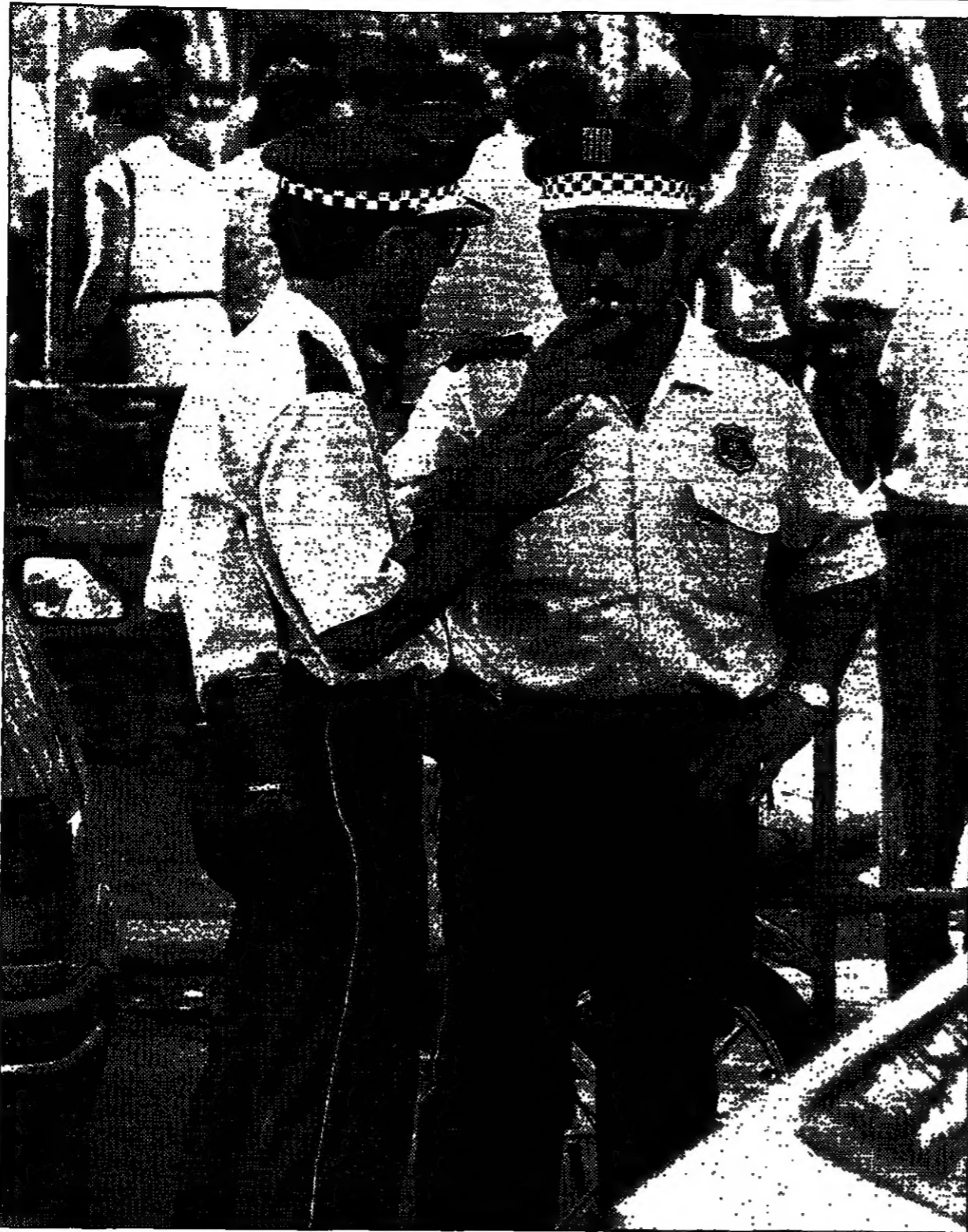
Outflow to... alarms Nor...



Life's a drag for taxed Spanish smokers

Julia Hayley in Madrid reports a tobacco shortage

TEMPERS were frayed in Spain this week. Temperatures climbed well past 40 C as millions of cars snarled the roads to start the August exodus to coast and mountains. To add to the misery, many of the slowly crawling drivers risked being hit-out cigarettes — no joke in a nation of hardened smokers. A government decision late last week to raise tobacco and alcohol taxes to cover a large deficit prompted a run on cigarettes. On Monday, tobacconists rushed to warehouses belonging to the partly state-owned tobacco distributor, Tabacalera, to stock up before the price rise took effect, only to find them closed. In turn, smokers were faced with "closed" signs at tobacconists across the country. Some owners had simply run out of stock, although Tabacalera said normal pre-ordered deliveries continued and it was only instant-demand warehouses that had to shut. On Tuesday, the day before the price rises came into effect, Tabacalera delivered some 37 million packs to shops, more than twice the usual amount for the time of year. The panic has now eased, but smokers are smarting from having to pay an extra 50 pesetas (18c) for a pack of black-tobacco Ducados — although Tabacalera said yesterday it would not pass on the increased costs for blond tobacco, at least for the time being, which analysts reckon could boost market share but hit profits. The flurry of sales was scant comfort for Tabacalera, whose share price tumbled 17 per cent in three days as investors bailed out. Spain has made substan-



The heat is on... Police officers taking a break in bustling Barcelona

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JEROME

tial progress in cracking down on the contraband trade, but each tax rise gives extra impetus to the smugglers. Spanish smokers — estimated to be 30-35 per cent of the population — are a recalcitrant lot. They are by no means the social outcasts they would be in some other countries. Bars are routinely awash with smoke, few restaurants have no-smoking sections and only rarely will a non-smoker complain if the

next table adds unwanted flavour to his or her meal. No-smoking signs in underground stations are usually ignored, although for some reason they are acknowledged inside the trains. Passengers about to get off line up at the train door, cigarettes in mouths and lighters poised, so as not to suffer abstinence longer than necessary. Former Socialist prime minister Felipe Gonzalez was a heavy cigarette smoker and his conserva-

tive successor, Jose Maria Aznar, who when he was elected admitted only to an occasional cigar after lunch, appears to be gradually increasing his consumption. When Mr Aznar decided to raise tobacco and alcohol taxes last week he said it was the previous government's fault. It was the only way to cover the 721 billion peseta hole he had discovered in the accounts of the public works, agriculture and

other ministries, and keep the budget deficit in check. Not everyone is complaining. Basil, a young West African who sells corn and smokes in a central Madrid metro station, says price rises will help him over the slack holiday period. "This pack of Marlboro costs 350 pesetas in the shops now and I'm selling it for 225," he says with a grin. "People have been buying three or four packs at a time these last few days. Why don't you have one?"

France slides ever deeper into privatisation mire

Crédit Lyonnais's sale may be next on 'desperate measures' list, says ALEX DUVAL SMITH in Paris

IF RUMOURS are confirmed that the French government is preparing a rush privatisation of the troubled Crédit Lyonnais bank, it will be the latest in a long line of sell-offs motivated more by desperation than design. The bank — which last month found a buyer for its most attractive asset, the MGM film studios — has failed to pull through after two ill-conceived restructuring plans costing taxpayers up to Fr100 million (Fr12.5 million) since last year. Analysts believe the privatisation plan will see the bank part with between 20 and 35 per cent of its capital by the end of this year — probably to foreign buyers, because the CL's main competitors, Banque Nationale de Paris and Société Générale, have shunned all recent approaches. Faced with losses of Fr3 billion this year and Fr2 billion in 1997, the French government has little choice. A third official restructuring plan would almost certainly be rejected by competition watchdogs in Brussels. Rumours of the government's plans for the Crédit Lyonnais surfaced only a week after it decided to sell the Compagnie Générale Maritime shipping group, which has absorbed more than Fr4 billion in aid. While CMG is in worse shape than other recently privatised companies, the right-

wing government, battling to reduce its budget deficit and meet Maastricht criteria, sorely needs to win over potential investors. Yet the performance of shares from the 10 privatisations since 1993 have failed to persuade. With the exception of four companies, including Société Générale bank and TF1 television. But one investment adviser, Jean-Jacques Avetissian, said the performance of privatised companies, even including those sold in the late 1990s, had been very uneven. "Overall, it is still better to have shares in privatised companies than to invest in bonds, but you cannot talk of anything better than average progress among the privatised industries," he said. The industrial sector, including Pechiney, which has benefited from a strengthened US dollar since December 1995, shows signs of long-term progress. But it also includes some of the worst performers. Renault's share value since its partial flotation in November 1994 has fallen by 34 per cent. Shares in Usinor-Sailler, Europe's leading steel group, are worth 24.4 per cent less than in June last year. While the privatisation list announced in 1993 still officially stands, dates for the sell-offs are being moved further forward. Tipped to be privatised next, probably in the autumn, is the defence and electronics group Thomson.

French privatisation: not a one-way bet

Share price changes, major privatised French companies.

Date	Company	Offer price, Fr.	Price, Fr 1/5/96	% change
Oct 95	Crédit Lyonnais de France	385	412	+6.74
Oct 95	Banque Nationale de Paris	240	179	-25.42
Nov 95	Elf-Aquitaine	135	131.50	-2.59
Jan 96	Elf Aquitaine	385	382.50	-0.64
Nov 94	Usinor-Sailler	152	105.50	-30.59
Nov 94	Renault	185	117.50	-36.76
Feb 95	Safran	128	261	+101.56
June 95	Usinor-Sailler	85	70.50	-18.02
June 95	Compagnie Générale Maritime	197	208	+5.58
June 95	Assurances Générales de France	125	137.70	+10.56

Outflow to EU alarms Norway

Jon Henley

NORWEGIAN companies' investments abroad surged above declining inward investment for the first time last year, the Norwegian Employers Federation said this week, sparking fears that the oil-rich country's famous "ne" to European Union membership may be doing long-term damage to the economy. Preliminary figures from a federation survey showed Norwegian companies invested some Nkr15.5 billion (Fr3.7 billion) abroad in 1995, more than double the 1993 total of Nkr6.5 billion. The 1996 figure is set to reach a new record, boosted by several big deals including the engineering group Kvaerner's purchase of Trafalgar House. Foreign companies' investments in Norway tumbled, however, from Nkr10.5 billion in 1993 to Nkr6.5 billion last year, with the vast majority in the oil and natural gas sector. Norwegians voted 52 per cent to 46 per cent in early 1995 against joining the EU. On the face of it, that decision has done the country nothing but good. Norway's economy grew by a robust 3.7 per cent in 1995, against the EU average of 2 per cent, and unemployment fell from 5.4 per cent to 4.5 per cent, about half the EU average. Exports, which account

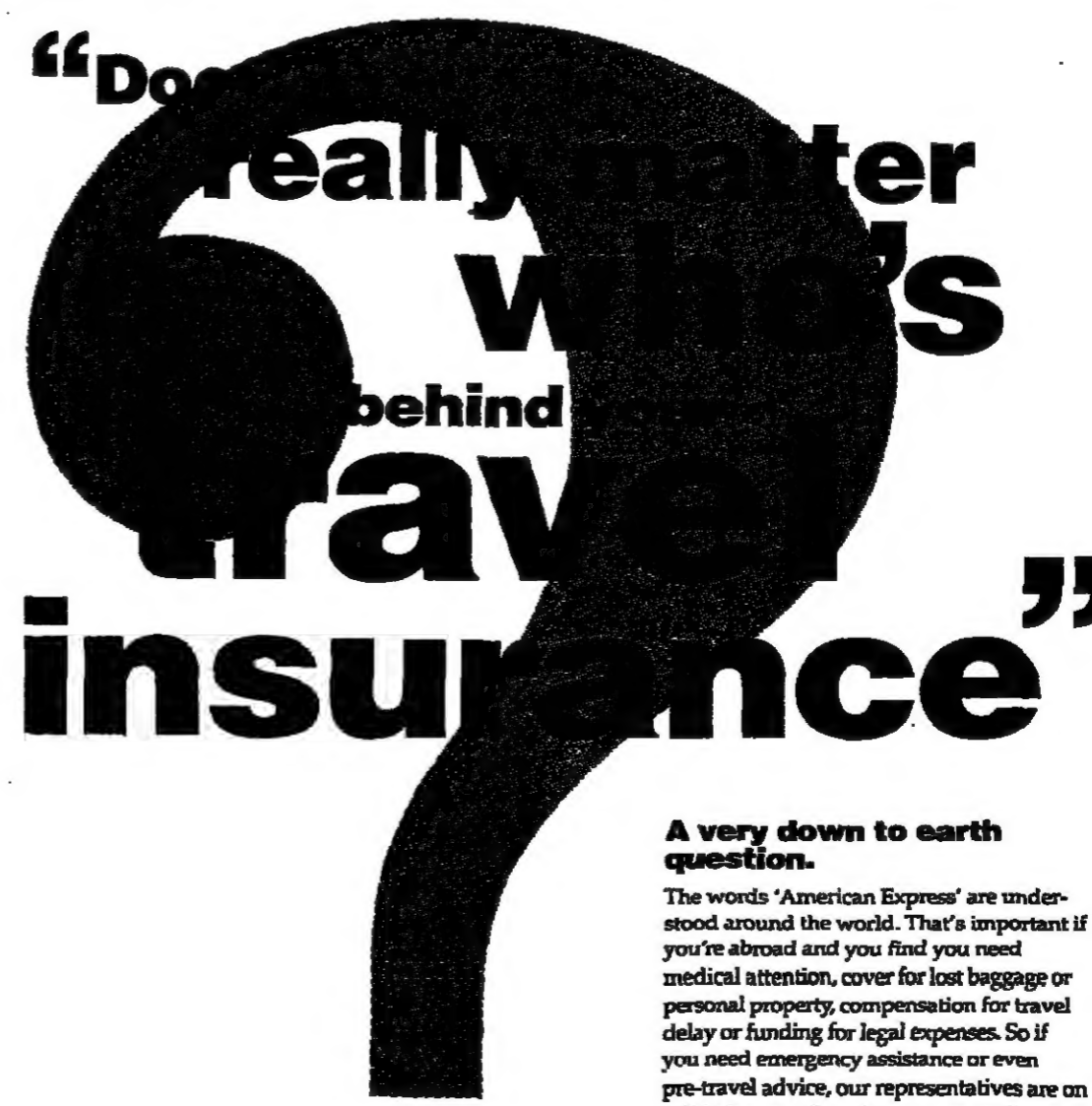
for 40 per cent of Norway's GDP, were up by 8 per cent, and the world's largest crude oil exporter after Saudi Arabia expects to have paid off its national debt by next year. "In one sense, the dramatic increase in Norwegian investment abroad can be seen as a sign of that strength," said Knut Sorlie, assistant director of the federation's international division. "The economy has been performing very well since the early 1990s, companies have been making big profits and they're expanding internationally." But the surge could also be explained by the No vote, with companies opting for more direct access to the European trade bloc, Mr Sorlie warned. "Almost 90 per cent of our foreign investment has been into EU countries," he said. The survey results had raised worries that Norway's non-membership could lead to "a wholesale flagging-out of Norwegian industry", Mr Sorlie said. Rumours have abounded in recent months that Kvaerner, one of the country's leading industrial conglomerates, is considering moving its worldwide headquarters out of Norway. "We really don't want that sort of expertise and capital to leave the country," Mr Sorlie said. Investment abroad should lead to increased exports for Norway, not to a decline in our industrial base."

Saxony fights EU over car plant aid

Ian Traynor in Bonn

THE east German state of Saxony was yesterday alleged to be jeopardising the country's annual billions of industrial subsidies after defying Brussels over payments to Volkswagen. While the car manufacturer was accused of "blackmail" for lobbying hard to exact the subsidies, Monika Wulf-Mathies, one of Germany's European Union commissioners, said the Saxon government was guilty of "fundamentalist opposition" to Brussels and was endangering "Germany's involvement in European policy." The Saxony government of Kurt Biedenkopf, a prominent figure in Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic party, branded the Brussels commission a "Euro-dictatorship" this week after the EU threatened to go to the European court over the vexed issue of DM241 million (Fr105 million) in subsidies to Volkswagen, which is building two car plants in the eastern state. The funds are part of an overall subsidy package of nearly DM800 million in state aid to Volkswagen, but Brussels has approved only DM540 million. The Dresden government's decision to dole out the aid regardless of the protests of Karel Van Miert, the EU competition commissioner, has shocked the political estab-

lishment in Bonn and Brussels who fear that former East Germany's preferential treatment in the European subsidies regime will be damaged by the confrontation between Mr Biedenkopf and Brussels. East German industry is believed to benefit from direct and indirect subsidies totalling DM130 billion a year, according to experts, but increasingly questions are being asked about where much of the money is going, whether it is all necessary, and whether it is in breach of EU competition regulations. Volkswagen is said to have warned that it would opt to build the new plants in eastern Europe if the subsidies were trimmed, an alleged threat Ms Wulf-Mathies described as blackmail. The Bonn government and the federal economic ministry have also been critical of the Saxon move. Earlier this year, the bankrupt Bremen shipbuilding group, Vulkan, was found to have diverted hundreds of millions in subsidies for east German acquisitions to its ailing subsidiaries in western Germany. "The Saxon case could spell the beginning of the end of the generous practice of subsidies for east Germany," the German business daily, Handelsblat, said yesterday. "Germany's credibility in competition issues in Brussels has been gravely damaged again after the diverted subsidies disaster at Bremer Vulkan."

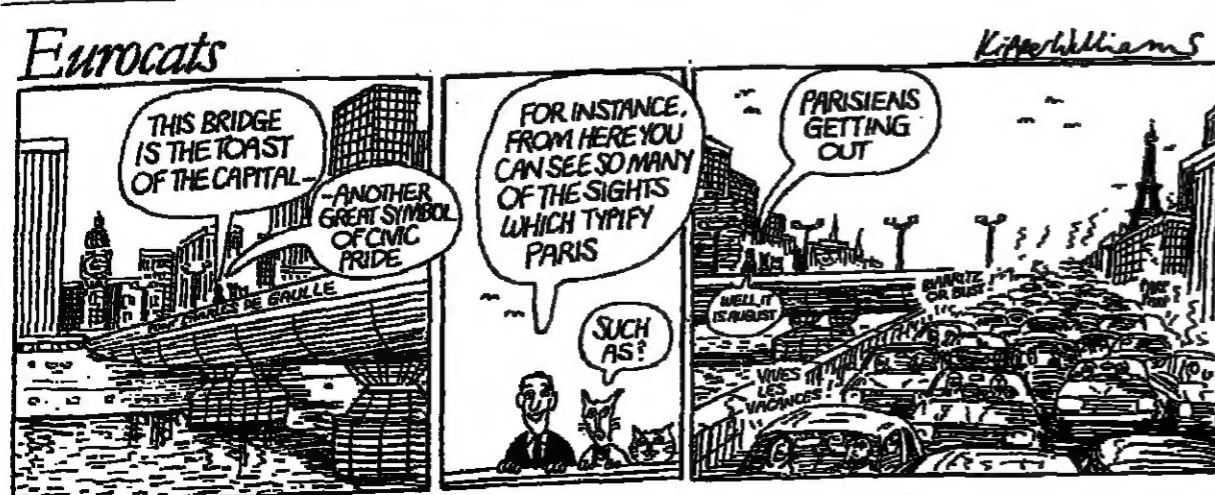


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The European Business page will next appear on August 31

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Finance Guardian

Brochures replace battleaxes in the 1990s battle for economic mastery of Britain's far north, writes SARAH RYLE



'We have got the gun cocked. We just need the target to aim at'
Falconer Waters

Power failure... Caithness residents say Westminster owes them something after closure of the pioneering Dounreay nuclear plant
PHOTOGRAPH BY MURDO MUIR

Oil fuels new clash of clans

CLAN wars are nothing new in the north of Scotland and before that there were Norsemen happy to make the trip across the North Sea to pillage and pinch the fertile land around the John O' Groats peninsula. Today there is a new battle brewing on this frontier and the stakes are high, even if there are no claymores or wood war-paint involved. This time, the rivalry is being fought out with glossy brochures and marketing task-forces, and the prize is not land but oil money.

Caithness, the northernmost mainland county in Britain, is challenging the traditional dominance of Shetland and Orkney as service bases for the oil companies exploring and developing a huge area of the Atlantic. On the tip of the British mainland, Caithness was an ideal place to put a nuclear plant, Dounreay, 41 years ago. Until two years ago, when the plug was pulled on the project, this pioneering outpost of the atomic age provided almost all of the jobs directly or indirectly in the community and boosted the population of Thurso to 10,000.

Number-crunching laird has left his mark on Thurso
THURSO can claim to have been in the forefront of pioneering economic development long before Dounreay arrived in 1955. The locals say it was a hotbed of innovation, thanks to its 19th century laird, John Sinclair. He is credited with inventing everything from the blueprint for New York to the word statistical. Sinclair (right, from a family painting) came up with it after searching for a term to apply to one of the most detailed surveys of a nation since the Domesday Book. He heard the word in German, according to his biographer, Rosalind Mitchell, where it meant information useful to the state. Sinclair used it to cover all data concerned with measuring the happiness of people. Details

about living standards were, in his view, required to promote happiness and prosperity. Such innovation was second nature to Sinclair, whose self-professed first love was "the collecting of useful information" and who was described in the Times as "The Precedent" because he leapt up in Parliament at every opportunity to cite a tedious historical fact. He meddled in all things economic, earning the disdain of celebrity economists like Ricardo and Adam Smith. Sinclair wrote letters of advice to everybody from William Pitt to Sir Walter Scott. In the first case, some of his ideas were taken up, such as the loyalty loan in 1796 and the agricultural board. He suggested that Scott get over the very

recent death of his wife by marrying the dowager duchess of Roxborough. That won him a polite reply but a bitchy mention in Scott's letters, describing his "trade of boring". His contribution to statistical practice was marked. His national account of Scotland ran to 20 volumes and included what is arguably an early version of the present-day Office for National Statistics Family Expenditure Survey. One example listed the expenses of a common labourer, with a wife and four children. It included school fees of 10 shillings for the children and the same amount for the "tear and wear of the man and wife's Sunday clothes". Thurso bears the mark of Sinclair's devotion to order in its street plan, which lo-

cal claim is the original blueprint for New York rather than the more usually cited Edinburgh. The so-called new town was bounded by four streets which surrounded eight streets, running south-west to north-east, and six lanes running at right angles to them. Sinclair spent time in Edinburgh as it was being built, so the link is possible. With his modernising drive, Sinclair had been alive today, probably would have embraced Dounreay and the battle for the oil fields. But perhaps the present Caithness promoters would be working hard to keep him and his precedents well away from the marketing side of the operation. *Agricultural Sir John, the life of Sir John Sinclair, by Rosalind Mitchell, 1962*



Waters, who worked with some of them. But, just as the people learned to love Dounreay, the Conservatives closed the plant. Now the population feels let down. The pioneering prototype fast reactor (PFR) was shut two years ago at a cost of 1,500 of the 3,000 direct and indirect jobs. The remaining employees are busy decommissioning the second reactor, closed in 1977, and will also work on winding down the PFR. The plant takes on four apprentices a year. There are now three companies at Dounreay, UKAEA, AEA, and AEA (which announced a record profit increase yesterday of 150 per cent and is to be privatised later this year) and Procord, a support firm, but between them they are expected to employ no more than 1,000 people. Thurso, a technological boom town until 1984, is beginning to feel the effects of the reduction. Mr Waters, aged 45, argued that the official unemployment figures for the area (about 9 per cent and not much above the national average) give a false picture because about 1,200 of the 1,500 lay-offs were early retirements. As a one-time international prize-winning wrestler, Mr Waters knows a few fighting tricks. The struggle to replace those Dounreay jobs is one he intends to win.

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the money to build tailored facilities at Scrabster and beyond would be ready to flow should it win contracts. It has been given the go-ahead in principle by grant controllers including the European Commission — Caithness is now classified as an economic region with special needs. "We feel that the Government owes us one after what happened at Dounreay," said Mr Richard-Jones. His pitch to the companies is simple: Caithness is the closest mainland point to the new fields; it has a port at Scrabster which can handle large shipping; an airport at Wick which is half the distance Aberdeen is from the oil and gas fields; a skilled work force available thanks to Dounreay investment in its colleges of further education. "We think the companies could halve their costs by coming to Caithness instead of Shetland or Orkney because they would not face the considerable costs involved in servicing island bases. We also have the technological expertise and Dounreay is already doing work for the oil industry on the engineering front."

Local people were loyal to the point of defensiveness after pressure groups claimed to have found a link between Dounreay and leukaemia cases in Thurso. So many jobs had been lost through mechanisation of farming and fishing, the two mainstays of the pre-1955 economy, that Dounreay was just too valuable to lose. Even the families of six childhood leukaemia cases refused to believe that the "Dounreay cluster", one of 45 identified in Scotland at that time, could be categorically linked to the jobs their parents did, according to Mr

Quick Crossword No. 8195
Solution No. 8194
Across
1 icy (7)
8 Wealthy (7)
9 River — point of no return (7)
10 Dawdled (7)
11 Seraglio (5)
13 Declaration of aims (6)
15 Infringe (5)
18 Stadium (5)
21 Of vision (7)
22 Free time (7)
23 Nonsense! (7)
24 Lock of hair (7)
Down
1 Circumference (5)
2 Fossil resin — approached with caution? (5)
3 Deprived of outside contact (13)
4 Jack the novelist — capital (6)
5 Accomplishment — condition (13)
6 Negligent (5)
7 Firm company — atelier (5)
12 Surmounting (4)
14 Lean (4)
15 Level (5)
16 Deadly (5)
17 Farmer — at the helm? (6)
19 Peer (5)
20 Vigilant (5)
22 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 338 248. Calls cost 25p per min, cheap rate, 45p per min at all other times. Service supplied by ATS

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British...
EU decision...
dashes hope...
Inside

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